The Semaphore

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TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS CELEBRATES 65TH ANNIVERSARY

THE LITTLE PARK THAT COULD

by George Schumm

When Jasper O'Farrell laid out the street grid for San Francisco in 1847, it was a visionary exercise. The plot of land the City now occupies was largely a barren, lumpy patch of ground. But with the finest natural bay on the Pacific Coast, it was inevitable that the area would someday be a major metropolitan center. And O'Farrell understood this.

Included in his plan were three parks, at the sites of Union, Portsmouth, and Washington Squares, modelled after the village squares so familiar back on the East Coast. (Though the parks weren't officially designated as squares until 1850, there's little doubt that this is what O'Farrell had in mind.) San Francisco would have no fewer than three, like three pearls on a string, each the heart of its distinctive neighborhood.

Washington Square Park has remained remarkably true to O'Farrell's original concept, retaining the general look and feel of a village square and playing much the same role. The park *is* today the heart of North Beach, site of myriad gatherings, registered as a National Landmark, and with cameos in a number of films. Our pearl has done pretty well for itself, although it hasn't always been an easy ride.

Early-on, the park was largely neglected, serving variously as a goat pasture, unofficial dump, and stonemason's yard. Not until the 1860s did the square host Fourth of July celebrations and, somewhat later, Columbus Day and other Italian festivals.

Then, with the park barely hitting stride, certain business and banking interests downtown decided they'd like better access to North Beach. What deep pockets wanted, deep pockets got. Columbus Avenue (then just an extension of Montgomery Street) was run diagonally across O'Farrell's grid in 1873-75, lopping off in the process the western side of the park. Marini Plaza, that triangular grove bordered by Columbus, Union Street, and Powell Street, is where Washington Square Park originally ended.

After the Big One of '06, the park was transformed into a camp for some 600 displaced residents, sporting Army tents and barracks. The site had been used in like fashion, though on a more modest scale, after two fires back in 1894 and 1901.

In the mid 1950s, the fledgling THD banded with other community groups to work toward the remodelling and beautification of the square. The efforts came to fruition in 1958. Now gone was the maze of criss-crossing sidewalks from an earlier renovation as the park assumed its present configuration. Pines and Lombardy poplars were put in at this time.

An inspired change it was. The sidewalks, though a common feature of squares of the day, too often served only as shortcuts from one side of the space to the other. The grassy oval and walking path of the new design had the very opposite effect, drawing people in—an invitation to come, stay a while, use the space to exercise, relax, or meet your neighbors.

No sooner was the work complete, however, than an "underground" parking garage was proposed. This would require, of course, tearing up everything just put in. Worse still was the precedent of Union Square, where the world's first such garage was installed in 1939-41. (Portsmouth Square wouldn't be turned into a parking structure with plaza on the roof until the 1960s.) You see, 'underground' meant merely under ground. In the offing was the prospect of a (partially) elevated garage covered by dirt, with Washington Square Park now perched on top like a giant hairpiece.

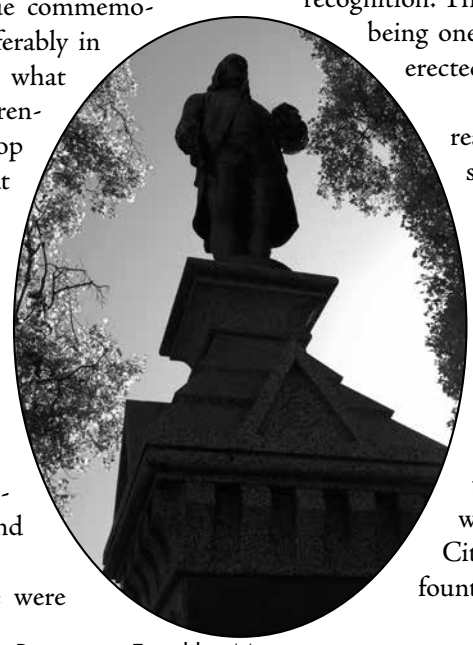
The plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors by a one-vote margin and the square saved only by Mayor John F. Shelly's veto, a stroke of the pen that many suspect cost him re-election. Like a bad penny, the idea resurfaced and had to be beaten back every few years until 1967, when, at last, the City adopted THD's suggestion of a parking facility over on Vallejo Street between Stockton Street and Powell. The structure sits there to this day discreetly tucked away.

Firefighter memorial near playground © Judy Irving

Whether the irrigation project currently underway proves a blessing or debacle remains to be seen. Imagine, just imagine the soggy patches are eliminated and one no longer has to work around the roped-off reseedings that have, for years now, roamed the center of the park like a Roomba. Imagine, as well, that the City's sudden, new-found interest in horticulture actually translates into responsible long-term park management. (Know it's a lot, but work with me. That $14.5 million limb isn't going to be forgotten downtown any time soon.) The park could emerge from this latest challenge with the brightest future of its 172 years' existence. Certainly, survive it will, as it always has.

Memorial plaques we have, such as the one in the northeast corner dedicated to Juana Briones y Topia de Miranda (1802-1889), a remarkable woman, an early pioneer who once grew vegetables and raised cattle on our parkland.

Any self-respecting nineteenth century village square would include also a statue commemorating something or someone, preferably in bronze. We got one—or, at least, what *looked* like one—in 1904 when a rendering of Ben Franklin standing atop a granite base, which had been at the corner of Kearny and Market Streets since 1879, was pulled down. This was the first public fountain in San Francisco created to supply clean, safe drinking water. It had been erected by Henry Cogswell, the town's first dentist, perhaps best remembered for designing "temperance fountains" and putting them up around the country.



Benjamin Franklin Monument © Judy Irving

Whether the figure and base were a well-intentioned gift or were simply dumped on the park by the powers that be—"Let's give it to Mikey, he'll eat anything."—is not clear.

In any case, the Franklin piece is *so* wrong. It's *Washington* Square Park, for heaven's sake, not *Franklin*. (And that's presumably George Washington, as the name was bestowed during the patriotic fervor leading up to the Civil War.) Nor does Ben Franklin have any special resonance with the Italian-American culture of the surrounding area. There's also a fundamental disconnect between the history of the "Franklin Monument" and the function of a memorial statue. It's the figure that matters, not the pedestal. Quite otherwise with Cogswell's fountain. His base, together with its now missing spigots, was the entire *raison d'etre*. Franklin was a mere embellishment.

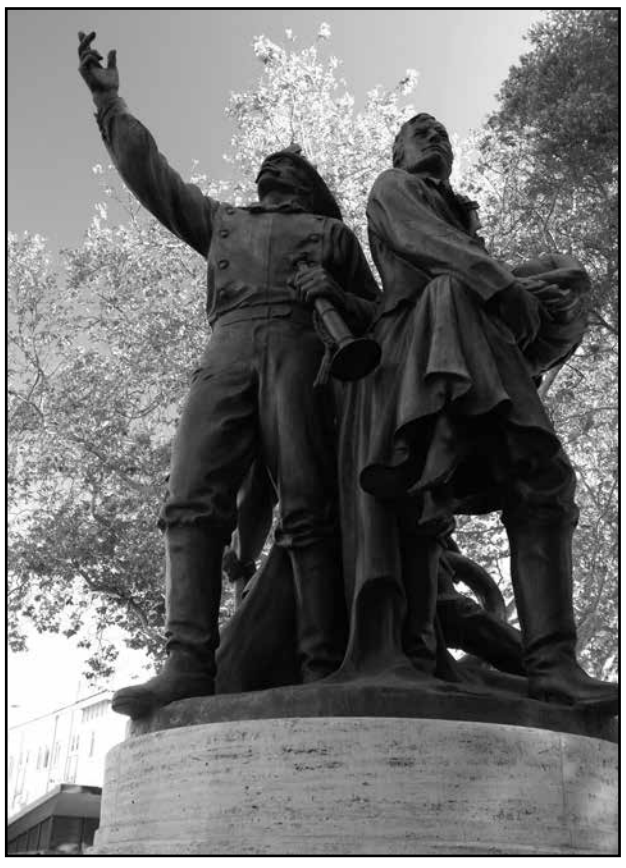
Our other statue—the memorial to the volunteer firemen who served the town until 1866—sits virtually unnoticed over by the playground. This one was funded with monies left over from the building of Coit Tower in 1933 and was slated originally for that site. Somehow we ended up with it.

But, unlike Cogswell's fountain, this one deserves pride of place in the center of the park. The sculpture itself is decent enough, its creator is known (unlike Franklin's, who isn't), and those honored were a vital part of this community's history, well-deserving of recognition. The thing has the added distinction of being one of very few pre-9/11 monuments erected in this country to firefighters.

If O'Farrell's vision is truly to be realized, the two statues need to be switched. Put our hand-me-down Franklin, with its dedication to "OUR BOYS AND GIRLS, WHO WILL TAKE OUR PLACES AND PASS ON" near the playground, fully restored back to the water fountain it was intended to be.

Give it back its *point*. Cogswell, the notorious temperance crusader, was a local. How appropriate if the City could boast a functional Cogswell fountain, of which few, if any, remain.

And how appropriate it would also be if a dedication to Mayor Shelly was added to the square. We owe its life to him! Well, maybe just a small plaque. He nixed the garage not because of the appalling idea it was but only because he deemed it too expensive.



Detail of firefighter memorial © Judy Irving

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Stan Hayes
President@thd.org

It's Fall, and the leaves are dropping. A golden Harvest moon is full in the night sky. Fading glow-eyed pumpkins are down to their last candle sputter. A chill wind hints at winter storms to come. Good and bad. There's a mix of news this time, too. Good and bad.

Gerry. First, the bad news—very bad. We've lost Gerry Crowley. She was a four-time president of THD, and we were so thrilled to honor her with THD's 2016 Outstanding Contribution to the Neighborhood Award. The inscription on the award says it well.

> *Honoring her inspiring example of how action can lead to outstanding achievements for the public good. The Telegraph Hill Dwellers recognizes Gerry Crowley as its former four-term president, and protector of the waterfront, our parks, and open spaces. An activist on many political and community fronts—and co-founder of the Neighborhood Network—she has consistently and tirelessly demonstrated true dedication to the protection and development of the natural resources, oral history, and unique character of North Beach and Telegraph Hill.*

She was co-founder of the Neighborhood Network and a member of the Pioneer Park Restoration Committee, Friends of Washington Square, and the Fay Park Advisory Board. She was on nonprofit boards that included the Northeast San Francisco Conservancy, Pelican Media, and the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center. For years, she was THD's representative to the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods. Whew… What a list, though just a partial one, with much more about Gerry later in this issue.

We've lost a cherished leader and friend. A part of our history. A piece of our heart and soul. A one-woman army for our neighborhood and City. Fighting for what she saw as right. And, we were the better for it. Thanks, Gerry. We'll miss you. Godspeed.

65th Anniversary Celebration. Now, the good news—very good! On October 6, an enthusiastic turnout of happy THD'ers celebrated THD's 65th anniversary on the south lawn of Coit Tower. (I hope you were there!) As clear in photos elsewhere in this issue, a wonderful event!

It was community-building at its best and most fun. Neighbors rediscovering old friends, while discovering new ones. A perfect setting, perfect weather, and Coit Tower at its perfect best. Families on blankets, laughing together on the lawn. Wildly creative arts on display, with children's paintings hung proudly in a prayer-flag line. Entertaining music by Ned Boynton and Rene Sevieri drifting by, while wispy white clouds did the same in an impossibly blue sky.

The program featured as a highlight reflections and reminiscences about THD and the Hill by District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin, a successful former THD president, a powerful voice in the City, and a great friend of the Hill. And, THD presented its 2019 Outstanding Contribution to the Neighborhood Award to Jon Golinger, for his major efforts on behalf of THD, the Hill, Coit Tower, the Northeast Waterfront, and the City. Notably, he has led numerous successful environmental and public interest campaigns, including Protect Coit Tower, Citizens to Save the Waterfront, No Wall on the Waterfront, Don't Silence the Voters, and the Coalition for a Clean & Reliable MUNI.

And, yes, there was a free lunch, or at least there was with a modestly-priced $10 ticket of admission, thanks to the good will, support, and generosity of our many local donors. So much excellent food was had that everyone got as much as they wanted, with some even left over.

There were numerous raffles and prizes galore, also thanks to our many sponsors. All that, and an exceptionally cool assortment of THD commemorative swag.

All made possible by a great "community" team of volunteers, working together, led so ably by Social & Program Co-Chairs Rachel Rodriguez and Patrice Ignacio Moll. Great organization, great execution, great team!

In all, a fine day. Really fine.

Varennes victory update: More good news. You may remember a project at 120 Varennes from The Semaphore Planning & Zoning report in our Spring 2019 issue. A historic building, rent-controlled, affordable housing lost to upscale market-rate luxury condos, with landlords displacing lower-income tenants, knowing an unoccupied unit commands a much higher sales price. Forcing out long-term tenants who had lived there for 31 years, starting in 1986. Two members of a rent-ordinance protected class, both seniors, who, with two relatives, were a multi-generational family. Displaced, buyout laws circumvented, with no record of a buyout at the Rent Board. A family coerced to leave "voluntarily," facing a long and uncertain construction period and threatened with eviction.

In March, counter to planning staff recommendations, the Planning Commission decided to take discretionary review and voted 6-0 to disapprove the project (as we had asked the Commission to do in our testimony). And, in the process, it sent a powerful message to others who would seek to use similar tactics elsewhere.

The developer appealed the Planning Commission's denial, resulting in a hearing at the Board of Appeals in September. THD and others testified at the hearing, asking that the Board of Appeals uphold the Planning Commission's denial by denying the developer's appeal.

By a 3-1 vote, the Board of Appeals denied the developer's appeal, as we had asked, thus upholding the Planning Commission's action denying the project. And, in the process, confirming the Planning Commission's important precedent that such predatory tactics must not be rewarded.

As always, remember: To join or to get information about THD, come to our website at *thd.org* or send an email to *hello@thd.org*.

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PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

BARBARY COAST NORTH BEACH
PROPOSED CANNABIS DISPENSARY AT 1335 GRANT AVE.

by Nancy Shanahan
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At a community meeting on September 12 at the Italian Athletic Club, a proposal to establish a North Beach cannabis dispensary was presented by its project sponsors. Neighbors and local businesses had an opportunity to find out what is being planned for this location, ask questions, and meet the Barbary Coast North Beach team members.

The proposed dispensary would be located on the west side of Grant Avenue in the now-vacant storefront at 1335 Grant Ave. (previously occupied by Chong's Barber and Beauty Shop), while an art gallery would be installed as part of the project in the adjacent storefront at 1331 Grant (previously occupied by Alpha Laundromat). The proposed art gallery, to be curated by North Beach resident and artist Jeremy Fish, would be subsidized by the dispensary as a community benefit. As explained by Barbary Coast North Beach team members, subsiding the costs would allow the gallery to give the participating artists up to an 80/20 split of profits from the sales of their art.

Proposed cannabis dispensary on Grant Avenue

© Mavrik Studio (dispensary architect)

Barbary Coast North Beach Proposal—Questions and Answers

Q: What are the proposed hours of operation?

A: 10 am to 10 pm seven days a week. The last customer would be allowed to enter at 9:30 pm.

Q: Will there be a line on the sidewalk?

A: There'll be space inside for up to 15 people. Because of the narrowness of the sidewalk on Grant, no line will be allowed outside. Customers may wait in the adjacent art gallery or pick up beepers, which will notify them to return to the dispensary.

Q: Will customers be allowed to smoke or otherwise consume cannabis products on-site?

A: No. Unlike Barbary Coast's existing dispensary at 925 Mission St., which has a lounge area, consumption of the cannabis products will not be allowed within the dispensary.

Q: Will minors be able to purchase cannabis products?

A: State law requires all customers to provide valid IDs proving they are 21 years or older, with the exception of medical patients, who may purchase medical cannabis with authorized state permits and valid IDs verifying they are 18 years or older. No one will be allowed inside the dispensary without a valid ID.

Q: Will there be a security guard on the street?

A: There will be an unarmed private security guard at the front door and security cameras both inside and outside the premises. The security guard will patrol within 100 to 200 feet in each direction to prevent customers from consuming cannabis on the street or double-parking on Grant.

Q: How many customers are expected per day/at peak hours?

A: A maximum of 200-300 per day, with 40-50 customers during peak hours. The dispensary will not be designed for large numbers of people nor to attract tourists, as there are several permits pending for other dispensaries in the Fisherman's Wharf area.

Current view of site of proposed cannabis dispensary

© Judy Irving

Q: Given the numbers of customers expected and the narrowness of Grant, how will the increased traffic and double-parking—particularly by those arriving by Uber or Lyft—be addressed?

A: Because parking in North Beach is limited, expectations are that most customers will come by foot, including about 300 residents of North Beach who currently shop in other dispensary locations. The security guard will try to prevent customers from double-parking on Grant; those who do will not be allowed back into the dispensary. (The team suggested requiring Uber or Lyft to drop off and pick up customers on Green Street instead of Grant.)

Q: Who will be waiting on customers?

A: The dispensary in North Beach will have seven to ten employees (called 'budtenders') trained to educate customers—from first-time to experienced users of both medical and recreational cannabis—on what products will be best for their needs. The Barbary Coast North Beach team is committed to community involvement and to hiring local residents.

Q: What alterations are being proposed to the exterior of the building, which is located within the Upper Grant Historic District?

A: The architectural renderings show the proposed exterior changes to include restoring the original row of small clerestory windows along the top of the storefronts consistent with other historic buildings along Grant. (THD commented that the original clerestory windows are likely to exist behind the current signage and we urged the architect to retain them.)

Q: Since the merger of existing storefronts is not allowed in the North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District, will the two separate storefronts at 1331 Grant and 1335 Grant be preserved?

A: The existing storefronts would not be internally connected, and each would maintain a separate entrance and its own restroom facilities. The team is working with the Planning Department to resolve any remaining design issues. As required, each space will accommodate physically-impaired persons.

Q: What Planning Commission approvals are required?

A: To obtain a building permit for a new cannabis dispensary in North Beach, a Conditional Use Authorization must first be approved by the Planning Commission at a publicly-noticed hearing.

Q: When does the new dispensary plan to open? When will the Conditional Use hearing be scheduled?

A: There is a push to open in 2020. Pending resolution of remaining design issues with the Planning Department, the hope is to have the Conditional Use hearing late this year or early 2020, followed by 45-60 days to obtain a building permit, and then three to four months of construction. State and local licenses will also be required.

Q: Will there be more than one dispensary in North Beach?

A: No. Cannabis retailers may not be located within a 600-foot radius of any parcel containing an existing school or any one that contains another cannabis retailer. Where multiple applications for locations within 600 feet of one another are received, the Office of Cannabis is required to process the first-received application, holding any later-received applications in abeyance. Barbary Coast North Beach was the first qualified applicant in North Beach.

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DISTRICT 3 SUPERVISOR REPORT

ELECTION RUN-DOWN—WHAT'S ON YOUR BALLOT & WHY?

by Supervisor Aaron Peskin
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Since my last *Semaphore* Report, my office has been working on everything from expanding North Beach's Big Belly trash can program to keeping the Washington Square Irrigation Project on track to helping small business owners access city resources to help them prosper.

Election, election: By the time you receive this, the election will be mere days away. For your consideration, here are my humble recommendations for local measures on the November 5, 2019 Ballot.

PROP A: Experts agree that money is the single biggest obstacle to addressing our housing crisis, as state and federal funding has dried up. Proposition A is a $600 million Affordable Housing Bond, the largest the City has ever undertaken. A joint effort between the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors, there are many housing projects outlined in the Bond Plan, including, for the first time, dedicated funding for senior and teacher housing projects. By our working with the City Controller, passage of this measure will not increase property taxes. Proposition A will help us make considerable progress on our shared priorities to produce and preserve low- and middle-income housing. **YES on A.**

PROP B: Community feedback from the senior and disabled communities led my colleague, Supervisor Norman Yee, to put this Charter Amendment on the ballot. Proposition B would change the name of the City's Aging and Adult Services Department and Commission to 'Disability and Aging Services,' more accurately reflecting whom the Department serves. It would also change the appointment criteria of the seven-member Commission requiring that one member be more than 60 years old, another be disabled, and still another be a U.S. military veteran. **YES on B.**

PROP C: As Big Tobacco loses its core clientele to smoking-related death and illness, it's made a concerted push to hook younger customers through "kid-friendly" marketing of e-cigarettes. The testimonials from parents, public health officials, and school administrations jive with the numbers from the National Youth Tobacco Survey: e-cigarette use among high-schoolers has risen every year, with 27.5 percent of all high school students vaping. With the most recent vaping death bringing the total to 24 nationwide so far this year, it's time to regulate an industry that has invested millions of dollars lobbying against common-sense public health reforms.

Proposition C was put on the ballot by Big Tobacco company Juul to rewrite a local law authored by Supervisor Shamann Walton and City Attorney Dennis Herrera that cracks down on e-cigarettes that are unregulated and unauthorized by the FDA. Instead of obtaining FDA authorization allowing Juul to continue selling e-cigarettes in San Francisco, Juul decided to fund Proposition C, a cynical ploy to rewrite the San Francisco Health Code to suit its own business model and tie the hands of the City to regulate addictive nicotine products in the future. As of this writing, Juul has dumped $11 million into passing its measure. Wherever you stand on the issue of vaping, no corporation should be allowed to buy an election so it can make public policy. **NO on C!**

PROP D: Many academic and government studies have outlined the debilitating impact of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) on the City's street safety and congestion, affirming what we see daily: Uber and Lyft vehicles (the vast majority of which come from out-of-county) have contributed more than 50 percent of the City's increase in traffic gridlock in the last several years. While State law prohibits us from regulating them, requiring them to take the same safety classes as taxi drivers, or capping the number of their vehicles on the street, we can levy an appropriate per-ride fee to pay for their impacts. Proposition D would impose a modest business fee on TNC trip revenue, dedicated to hiring more Muni drivers and increasing our Muni fleet, as well as funding pedestrian- and bike-safety projects. Even the TNC companies acknowledge it's time for them to pay their fair share to mitigate the impacts they're having on our public streets and infrastructure. We would be the first city in California to implement this program, following in the footsteps of Portland, Oregon, New York City, and the state of Massachusetts. **YES on D.**

PROP E: If funding is the top obstacle to building affordable housing, the second is securing developable land. Proposition E will immediately rezone hundreds of large developable parcels and public land for affordable housing and pilot a new category of affordable housing for teachers and educators on SFUSD and City College property. One of our Garfield Elementary teachers recently broke down in tears sharing her struggle to keep herself, her teacher husband, and baby girl off the streets as they prepare to move yet again from a friend's garage to an RV while still paying off student loans and teaching full-time. Another longtime Spring Valley teacher recently came to me to ask for help in finding housing that she would be income-eligible for after being evicted from her longtime Russian Hill home. Enough is enough. I'm a proud co-author of this legislation, along with Supervisors Fewer, Walton, and Haney, legislation developed in partnership with the folks most impacted: our teachers. Join United Educators of San Francisco in voting: **YES on E.**

PROP F: Since the devastating 2010 Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. FEC, corporate money has flooded San Francisco elections like never before. Proposition F would strengthen the San Francisco Campaign Finance Reform Ordinance and limit corruption or the appearance of corruption by restoring transparent campaign disclosure requirements and curbing pay-to-play politics of developers with land use approvals before the City. **YES on F.**

Remembering Gerry

This is a special and sad *Semaphore* because we're all still mourning the loss of our dear friend and neighbor, Gerry Crowley. I personally struggle to put into words what Gerry has meant to me. There is no one who has had so much to do with who I have become. I've spent the last several weekends and snatches of time after work sorting through a lifetime of memories and personal odds and ends that Gerry accumulated in her apartment of many decades. Old *Semaphores* filed away next to decades of photo memorabilia chronicling tree plantings, tenant protests, Democratic Party events, and neighborhood block parties. Stacks of newspapers dating back to 1968 are proof that Gerry was not only a faithful 49er fan but a loyal *Chronicle* subscriber, too! You will read in these pages all about her storied legacy as a lifelong neighborhood, waterfront, tenant, and political activist, but it was Gerry's capacity to ferret out the potential in everyone she met that was her gift to the day that she transitioned from cancer.

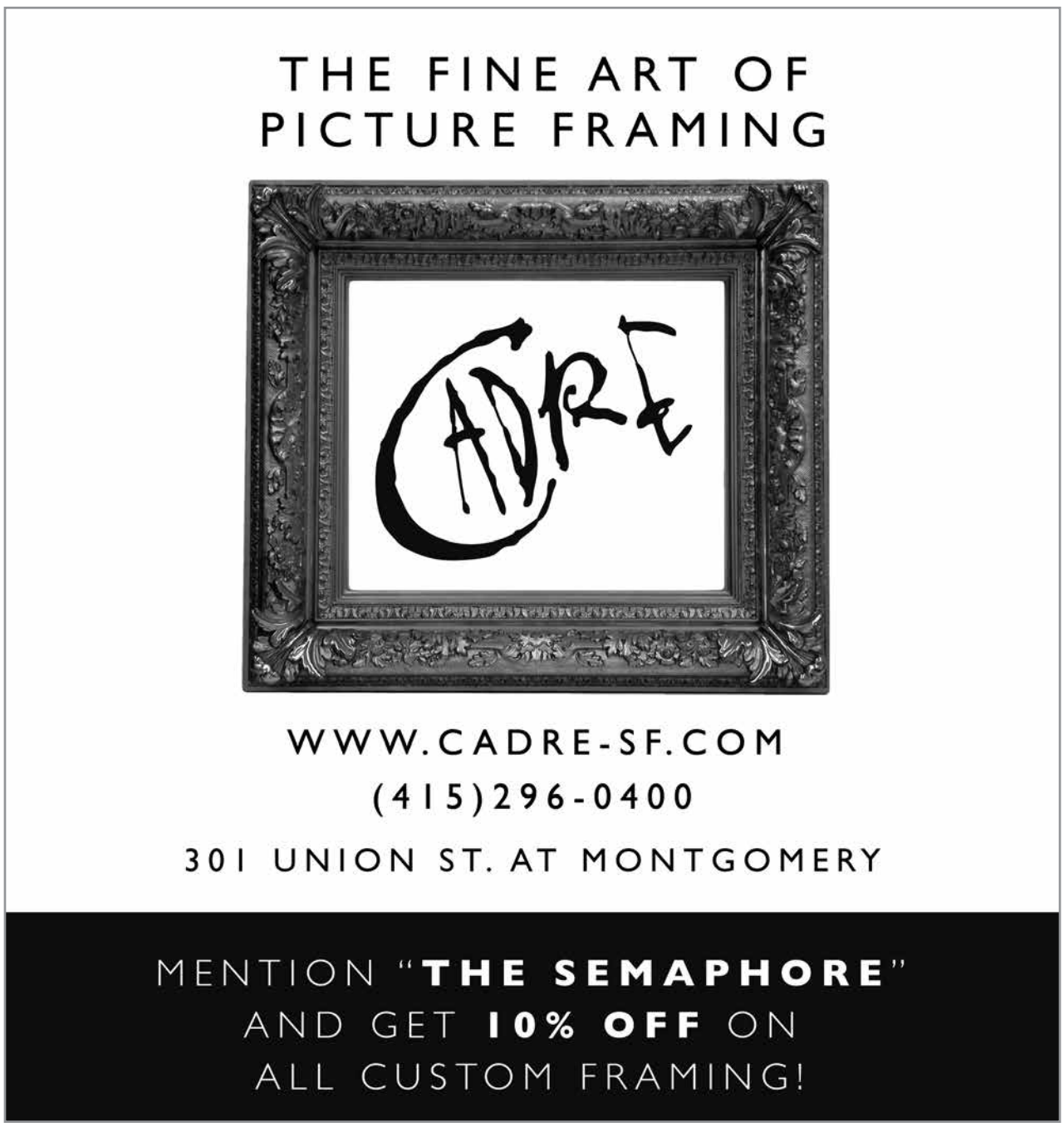
I would not be a Supervisor were it not for this passionate and plucky woman, who saw something in me—a little spark—which she invested in fanning into a love for public service almost 20 years ago. As the years go on, it is difficult to see so many beloved neighbors like Gerry pass on, but I know that her hard work to cultivate young leaders will pay dividends in the years to come.

I miss you, Gerry. You were always a champion for the most vulnerable among us, our seniors, our children, our artists, our homeless, our funky characters. Thank you for reminding me always of my purpose and what it means to represent this community. You have left us all with a powerful compass that I will keep close to me always.

To the rest of my neighbors: Please continue to take care of each other, to check in on each other, and to ask how you can engage in making the neighborhood stronger and more livable.

See you around the neighborhood, and don't forget to vote!

Aaron



FROM THE EDITOR

A YEAR IN . . .

by Cap Caplan, Semaphore Editor
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With such a jam-packed issue, I've decided to forego my usual piece this time. THD's 65th Anniversary, Washington Park losses, a cannabis shop in North Beach, intriguing ideas about the transportation grid, a call for transcribers, and much more. You'll have to wait until the next issue to read "Interrupted by an Earthquake." I won't change the story, I promise.

This issue marks the start of my second year as Editor of *The Semaphore*. It's been a fast-paced, sometimes enervating, frenetic, rewarding, frustrating, laugh-out-louding, inspiring time.

Judy Irving and I spent the year recruiting writers, making assignments, and editing non-stop during one crazed week every three months (happening right now). A big thank you to the writers and reporters who've gone on the ride with us, these extraordinary people who labor over their work. Writing the report is the last, not first step. Gathering data, attending meetings, conducting interviews, making phone calls, sending texts and emails, these are the voluntary tasks reporters take on. These are tasks staff members do in addition to their day jobs as lawyers, filmmakers, artists, entrepreneurs—to name but a few.

Now, it's your turn, readers. We want your feedback, your advice.

Perusing the last year's issues, what do you think? Did we have enough of what you wanted, whether that be history, social events, portraits, news, the environment, or something else?

What constituencies have we failed to attract? What might we do to bring them on board?

What else should we know? What will help us to make Year Two the best? No, not editing refreshments from the cannabis shop.

Please tell us at *semaphore@thd.org*. Thank you.

TRANSPORTATION REPORT

REDUCING TRAFFIC NOISE IN NORTH BEACH

by David Becker, Committee Co-Chair
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A sweet couple moved out of my apartment building recently. Their complaint was familiar: too much street noise at night.

It's 1:30 am. My room is pitch dark. I can't sleep. I'm patiently waiting for the honking to stop. It's always the same: One car starts honking, then three more join in, and soon drivers are venting their frustration. The honking stops for 15 minutes and then starts again. This occurs every Thursday through Sunday evening like clockwork.

Let's talk about Grant Avenue between Vallejo and Green Streets. Almost every night, there are cars honking. It's irritating to be jolted awake because of a street design problem.

Before we discuss potential solutions, let's agree that the status quo is unacceptable. Gridlock traffic is unacceptable, and honking at 2 am is unacceptable.

Grant is a nightly hot spot for drinking and parties. We have so many attractions, it's no wonder people are drawn to our neighborhood. Grant is a single lane one-way street between Vallejo and Green with parking on both sides. Most bars are located on this section of Grant, resulting in high foot and car traffic after 11 pm.

When an Uber or taxi stops for a pick-up or drop-off, there is no way for cars to pass. As traffic rolls in, this section of Grant grinds to a halt. That's when we start hearing the honks echoing through our neighborhood.

One proposed solution is to give tickets for honking. But a police officer stopping cars for a period of time combined with normal traffic ensures complete gridlock and exacerbates the problem.

We do have alternative solutions available. Columbus Avenue is a two-minute walk from Grant and is mostly clear of traffic at night. It has two lanes in each direction, so if a Lyft pulls over for a pick-up, it will not block traffic.

One solution is to work with Uber and Lyft to determine acceptable pickup locations based on a geofence (a virtual fence around a certain area, which restricts Ubers from picking up passengers). Geofences are already in place on Valencia Street in the Mission, at The Westfield Mall, and at the NEMA building in SOMA. Once a geofence is active, people on Grant requesting an Uber or Lyft after 11 pm will be guided to Columbus for their pick-up. If implemented, this method would immediately reduce the number of cars on Grant at night. A geofence is a relatively painless solution and requires little effort to implement.

A more permanent solution requires a street design change. This block on Grant is completely different at night than during the day. We should account for the higher volume of cars at night and modify evening traffic routes. Between 11 pm and 3 am, we could restrict the street to pedestrian-only traffic by adding a temporary barrier to block incoming traffic on Grant starting on Vallejo. Restricting traffic when there is a bottleneck seems counter-intuitive, but when the street is not designed for high traffic volume, it's more efficient to redirect all traffic to a more appropriate street like Columbus.

In this case, creating models and discussing theories of impact is more difficult than a simple test. For one night, we should work with Central Station to place a temporary barrier or cones to block traffic onto Grant at Vallejo. If we see a detrimental impact (more traffic or more noise), we will count the test a failure and reevaluate.

A quiet, honk-free night should not be a luxury. These solutions are by no means exhaustive. If you have other ideas for this block, please e-mail *david.becker@thd.org*. I would love to hear your thoughts.

Grant Avenue by day

© David Becker

Grant Avenue by night

© David Becker

David Becker, The Semaphore's keen-eyed, inquisitive, well-spoken reporter and THD Transportation Co-Chair has moved to Europe, resigning his position on the board as well as on The Semaphore. We will miss him.

FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON SQUARE

Meet on the 2nd Tuesday every month, with work parties in the Square every quarter. See website for times, dates, locations.

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PARKS & TREES REPORT

CUPRESSUS MACROCARPA 1867 - 2019

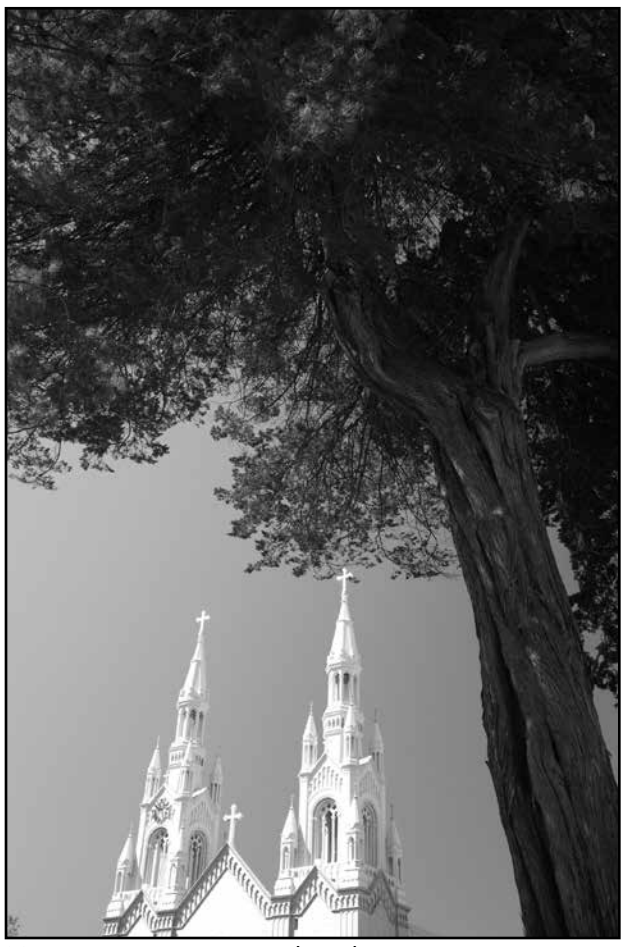
by Don Raichle, Committee Chair
don.raichle@thd.org

In the midst of construction related to the irrigation and drainage project at Washington Square, the lone Monterey Cypress in the Park was taken down. This is not the first tree to be lost in recent months. Several trees had previously been identified as structurally unsound and were removed. Others were the victim of shoddy construction practices during the construction of the children's playground or had suffered from years of poor maintenance. In the case of this tree, however, the culprit was old age. Typically, this species (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) lives 80 to 100 years. As best as we can tell, this tree was more than 150 years old.

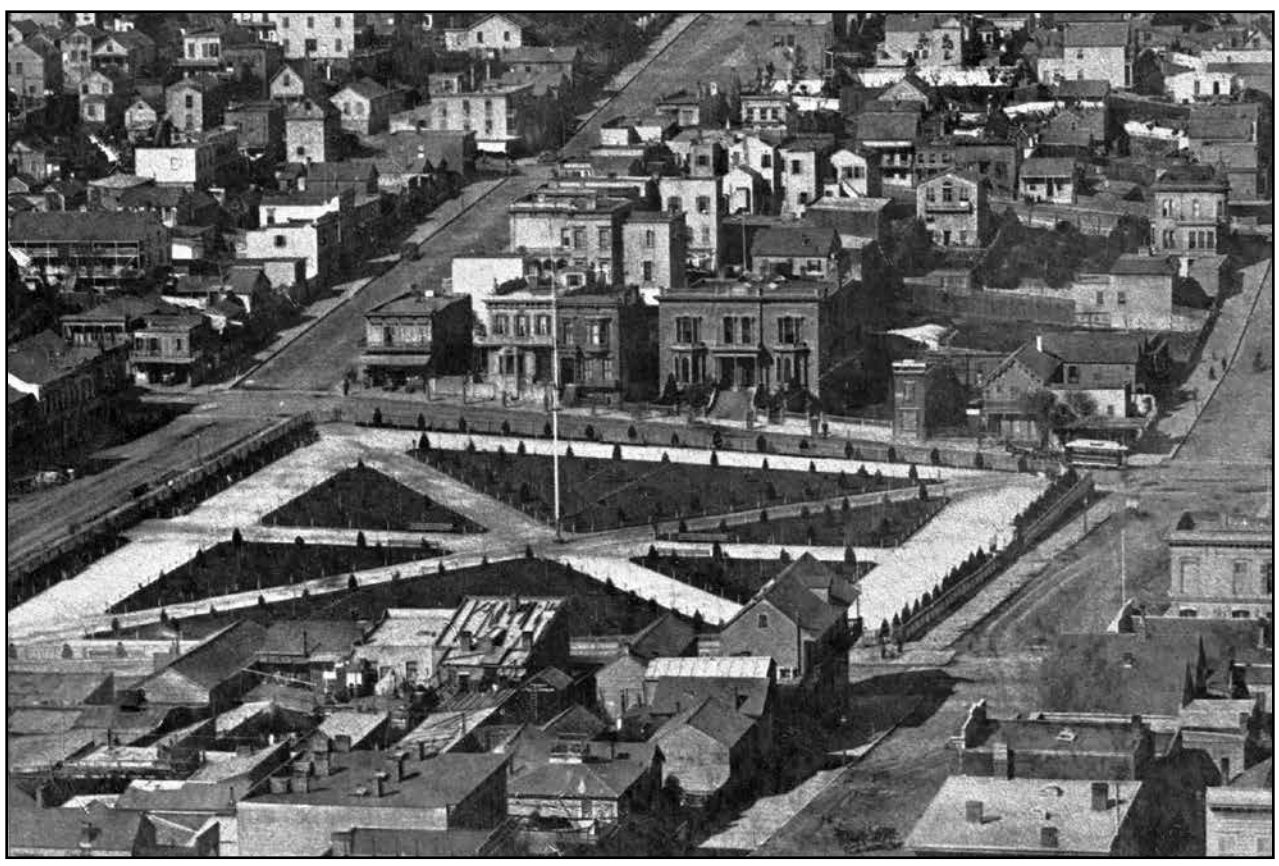
The need for its removal came as a surprise since it hadn't been identified in earlier arborist reports as displaying noticeable poor health. However, at the start of the current construction project, a more intensive review, including surveying its canopy from atop a cherry picker, revealed significant structural deterioration and rot. Examining its roots showed that rubble, probably dating back to the 1906 earthquake and subsequent street construction, had led to years of poor subsurface growth that contributed to its failing health. In the end, it was determined that while extensive pruning might be able to preserve it for a few more years, the remaining "tree" would consist of a 60-foot-tall pole with minimal foliage and little hope of adding more.

As a result, the decision was made to cut it down. Because of the Cypress's age and size, the Department of Recreation and Parks (Rec/Park) reached out to local stakeholders, including THD, to review the tree's fate. While no one was happy at its loss, the focus turned to ensuring local input on its replacement and reinforcing local insistence that Rec/Park better support the health of the existing and new trees in the park. So now the tree is gone, but before we forget that it was there, where it came from deserves a closer examination. As it turns out, this Cypress was one of the oldest trees in San Francisco and was older than just about everything around it.

Looking across the Golden Gate to San Francisco, one is struck at how much of the city appears forested and green. This, despite being one of the densest cities in America. Thick groves of Eucalyptus, Pines, Cypress, and other trees in Golden Gate Park, the Presidio, and our many parks and squares give the impression that trees have always been part of our peninsula's landscape. The reality is that, unlike forests of Oaks in Oakland and stands of Redwoods in Redwood City (hence their names), prior to the gold rush and the rapid urbanization that followed, most of what we now know as San Francisco was characterized by sand dunes and grassy slopes where groves of trees were not the dominant feature. With the exception of the Presidio and occasional groves, the significant presence of trees was not part of the City's early landscape. Once the City began to grow, that began to change, albeit slowly. In 1850, only three public squares that would eventually serve as parks had been identified in the new town's layout. These included Portsmouth Square, the oldest, and Union and Washington Squares. The last two were gifts to the City of John White Geary, San Francisco's first mayor. Despite its declaration as an open space, it would be over a decade before trees were to be planted within Washington Square. It is then that the story of this last Cypress begins.



Monterey Cypress on its last day © Judy Irving

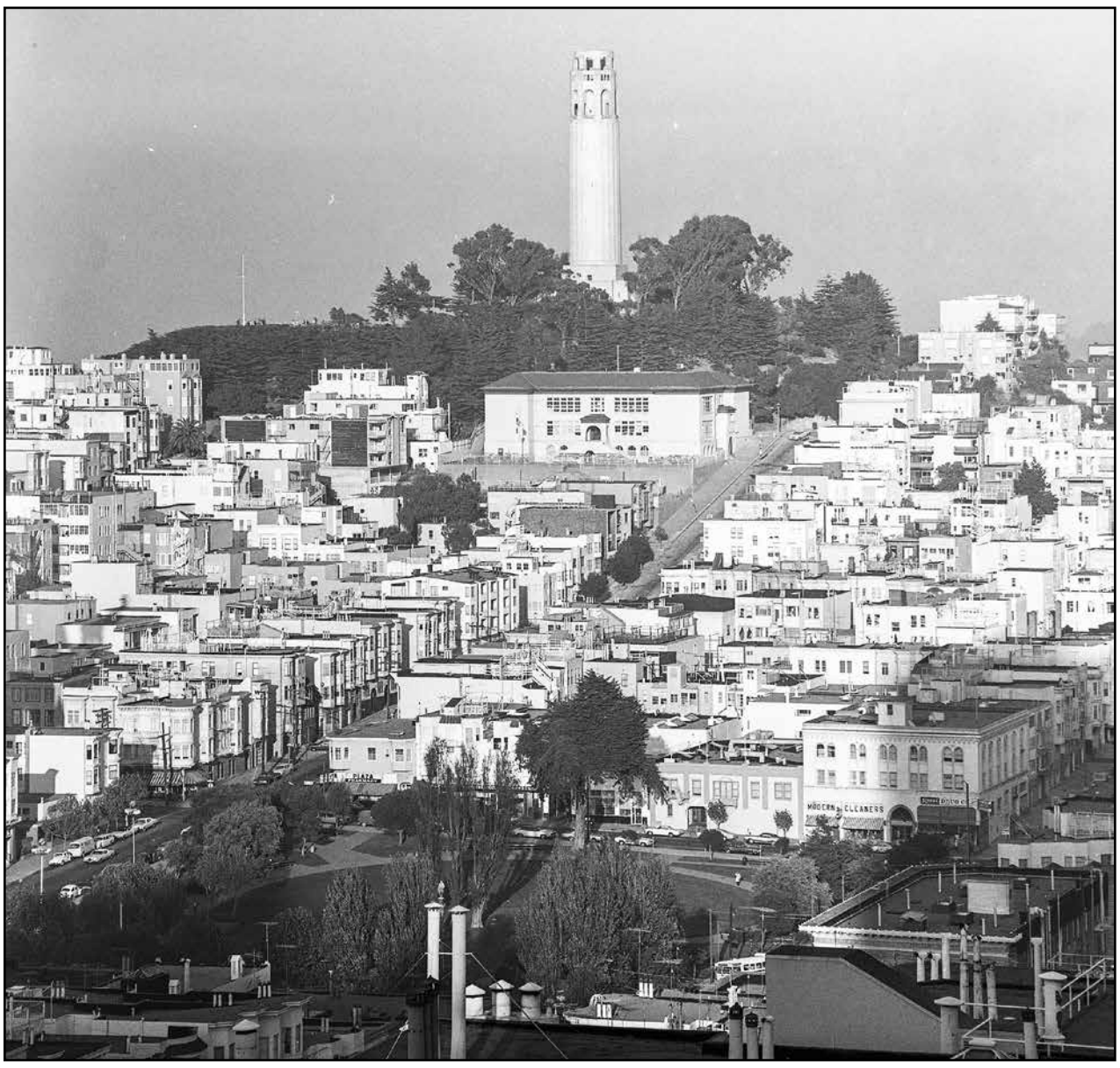


1867: Row of Cypress trees first planted (courtesy of a private collector)

1906: Cypress survived the earthquake (courtesy of a private collector)

Photos from the early 1860s show Washington Square as an open square with little or no planting at all. It was used as a parade ground, a location to celebrate the Fourth of July with fireworks, and as a local gathering space. By 1867, however, photos show that diagonal walkways that crossed at the park's center had been constructed and lined with trees. It should be noted that this was several years before plantings were first installed at Golden Gate Park and ahead of other large-scale planting of trees within the City, making these trees some of the earliest planted. Photos from the late 1890s and early 1900s show that many of the trees were removed as they grew larger. As we all know, in 1906 the earthquake and subsequent devastating fire essentially burned downtown San Francisco, including North Beach, to the ground. Washington Square, however, survived and became a camp for survivors. As can be seen in the photo, the Cypress were still standing. (Our recently lost tree is third from left along Stockton Street.)

As noted previously, Monterey Cypress are not long-lived trees. As anyone who lives near Pioneer Park can testify, after every storm, one or more of the Cypress surrounding Coit Tower will have lost a major branch or even blown down completely as occurred this Spring. They are very brittle and break up over time, and it is rare to find one that is more than 80 years old. This has been the case in Washington Square as well. By the 1950s, Washington Square was down to this one lone Cypress. The tree became part of the design that we know today and that is preserved by its landmark status. Its uniqueness was reinforced not only by outliving all the other trees from the original planting, it was also the only surviving tree from the three original San Francisco squares. Both Union and Portsmouth Squares became parking garages topped by paved plazas obliterating the trees planted there in the 1800s. It is also interesting to note that the Italian Stone Pines that seem so mature and large today are barely noticeable in a photo of the park from 1974.



1974: Lone Cypress joined by newly planted Stone Pines (COURTESY OF A PRIVATE COLLECTOR)

September 13, 2019: Cypress falling © DAVID KENNEDY

September 13, 2019: Cypress down © DAVID KENNEDY

Looking back, this Cypress has been a defiant neighbor and outlasted everything around it. The buildings that surrounded the park were lost in the quake, new ones built, and some of those replaced. With the exception of some of the trees in the Presidio and others scattered around the City, the Cypress was likely one of the oldest trees in San Francisco. But now it's gone. Less than an hour was needed to take down what had taken 150 years to create. Once on the ground, its hollowed-out trunk revealed that it would likely have come down on its own in the not-too-distant future, so its time, sadly, had come. Moving forward, Rec/Park is planning to replace it with a new tree to be selected with input from the neighborhood regarding species and size. Once in, it will not come close to replacing the monumental tree we lost. However, over time, what is planted will likely outlive the mature trees that we see now. Fortunately, there is also a plan to make sure the Cypress isn't forgotten. A portion of the trunk has been preserved to be made into an art piece, bench, or some other memorial feature to be located in the park as a reminder of its presence and the square's evolution over the last century and a half.

IN OTHER NEWS:

Regarding current activities in Washington Square:

- **Irrigation and Drainage Project:** Although work will not be completely finished by early December, it is anticipated that the perimeter fencing will be removed by then to allow for public use. Construction delays may push this opening later.
- **Canary Island Pine:** By the time you read this, the dying pine near the playground, gifted to the park by THD in 2011 but irreparably damaged by the playground renovation, will probably be gone. An evergreen tree will be planted in another location, as per Jack Early's original bequest.
- **Columbus Ficus Trees:** The Board of Appeals hearing has been continued to November 13.

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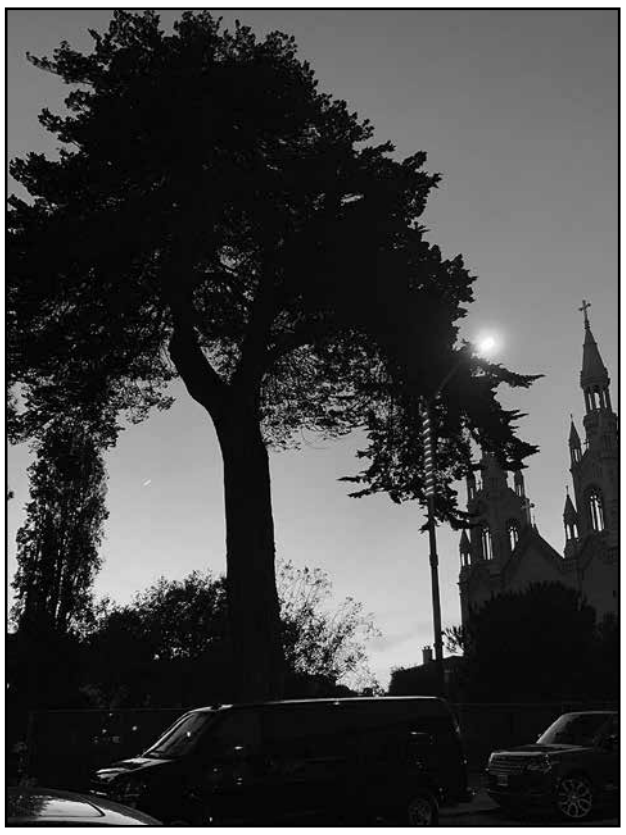


Monterey Cypress on its last night © NANCY SHANAHAN

Washington Square Park renovation in progress © NORTH BEACH NEWS

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

PUTTING THE SEMAPHORE ONLINE

by Al Fontes, Committee Chair
al.fontes@thd.org

For quite some time, electronic copies of The Semaphore have been available online at *www.thd.org/semaphore*. Although a rich and fascinating resource, it has had a couple problems.

About 100 issues have always been missing from the website. This is because our editing and typesetting processes did not yield easily accessible electronic copies of the publication. Starting with Issue 150 in the winter of 1999, we began receiving PDF versions of *The Semaphore*, which you can view or print with freely-available software. That issue, and every one published after that, was made available online. Unfortunately, given the limitations of our web hosting service, there is no way to search for text except within one individual issue. The online versions of Issues 1-56 are effectively pictures of paper newsletters that were scanned by Pete and Rozell Overmire, and searching for text within them is impossible.

Fortunately, about a year ago, we became one of many neighborhood organizations working with the San Francisco Department of Memory on a project known as "The Neighborhood Newspapers of San Francisco." This has enabled us to address the foregoing problems while making the collection a truly valuable resource for historical research.

I recently asked LisaRuth Elliott, Co-Director of Shaping San Francisco, to tell us more about that project.

The Neighborhood Newspapers of San Francisco collection is a grassroots effort to digitally showcase and provide open access to community news. The San Francisco Department of Memory consists of community history groups who have come together to promote more collaboration around local history, to influence the discourse of local history, to amplify work done by local historians that is often isolated work, and to share resources around local history-gathering and dissemination. In 2013, several underutilized large collections of neighborhood history in the form of newspaper archives were identified, some now out of print, which are being digitized and made available as historical resources. There are more than 1,900 issues of newspapers spanning a dozen different neighborhoods. The digitization project has largely been made possible through a relationship with the Books Scanning team at the Internet Archive. The collection is also hosted at the Internet Archive.

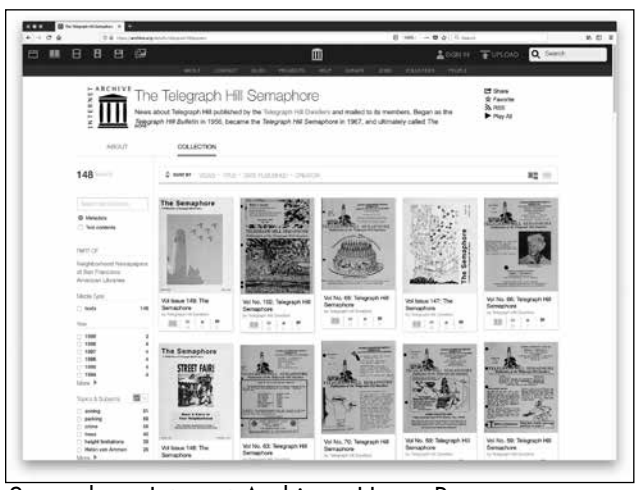
For about a year, I have been bringing batches of paper *Semaphores* to her office near the corner of 16th and Valencia Streets. As LisaRuth and her very hard-working volunteers scanned them, I would bring the next batch and return the previous set to our storage, rewarding myself with a Mission District burrito. The results of the scans were then published online.

Our part of the project is nearing completion, and every archived issue should be available online by the time you read this. I strongly encourage you to take a look at the collection, which is available at *archive.org/details/telegraphhillpapers*. To see the other fascinating neighborhood publications also online, go to *archive.org/details/sanfrancisconewspapers*.

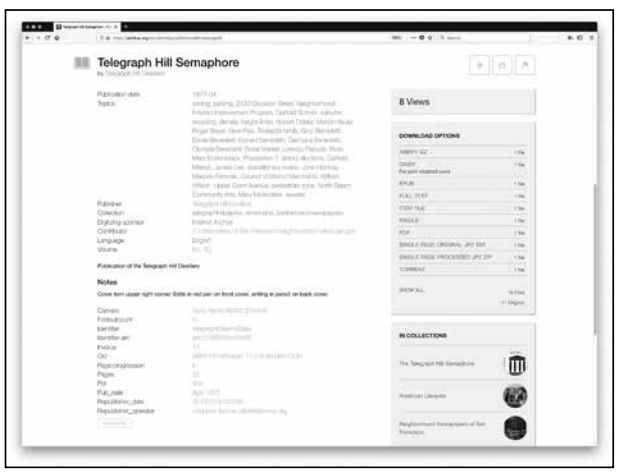
At that website, you can browse these issues by cover, read them online, and even download them in your preferred file format. You can search by date, look for topics of interest within the issues themselves, or find topics within a keyword index. Through the magic of OCR (optical character recognition), even the old paper issues have been indexed and are searchable. In addition, LisaRuth and her team have indexed the PDF files that were already on the THD website and included them in the collection. The result is the ability to search quickly for a word or phrase across all the issues that have been published since the very first one.

We will continue to make old issues of *The Semaphore* available through the THD website (*www.thd.org/semaphore*), but the THD Communications Committee is working to transform that web page into a kind of index into the archive.org collection.

I also encourage you to visit *www.shapingsf.org*, and *foundsf.org*, wonderful websites run by Shaping San Francisco for learning about San Francisco's rich history not only online but through ongoing events. When you go to those websites, please consider making a donation to help Shaping San Francisco's great work.

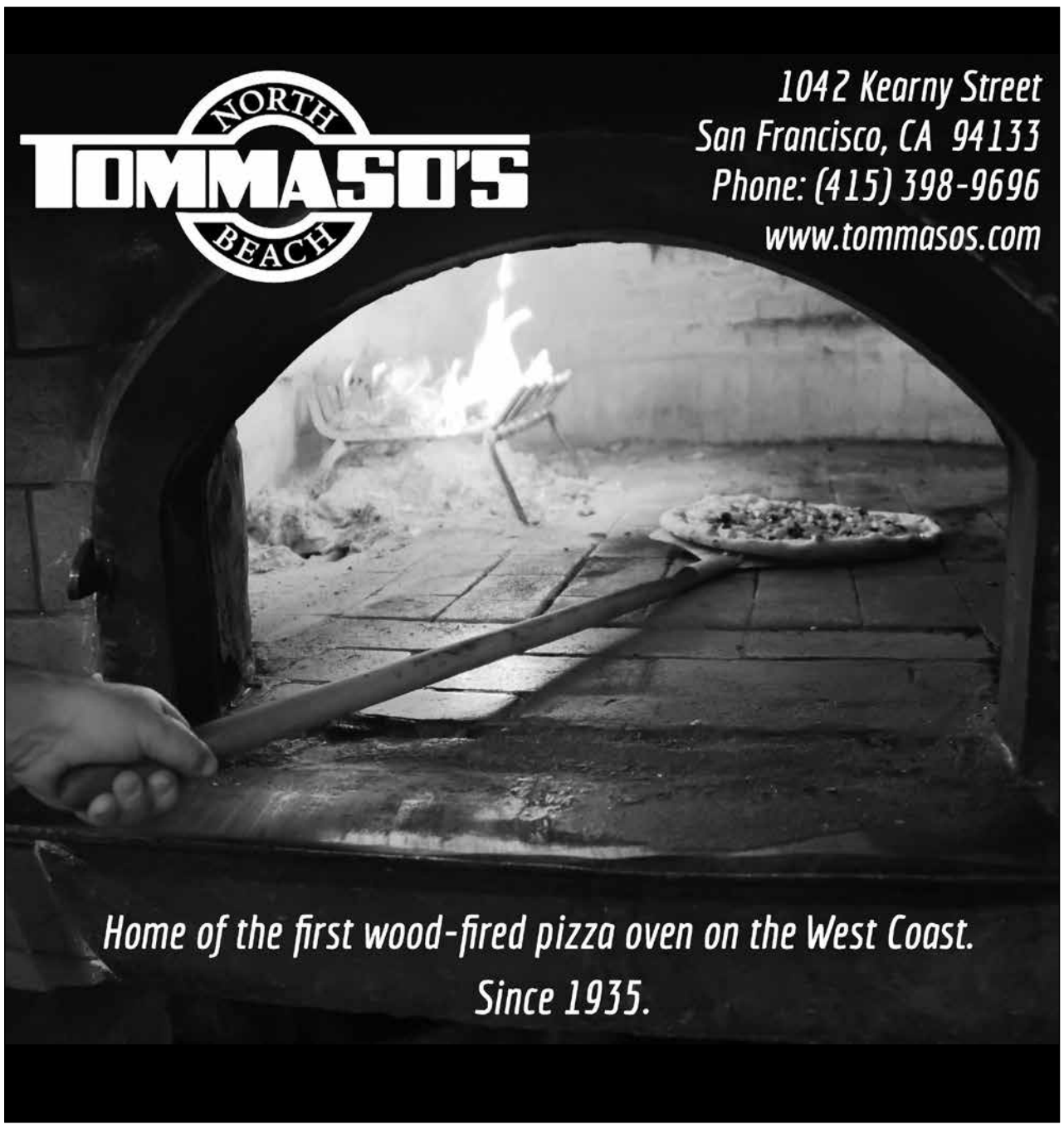


Semaphore Internet Archive—Home Page



Semaphore Internet Archive—Topics Page

Semaphore Internet Archive—Sample Page



THD'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

THD President Stan Hayes, award recipient Jon Golinger, and Supervisor Aaron Peskin at the 65th Anniversary picnic © Richelle Slota

Poster for 65th Anniversary Picnic (designed by Romalyn Schmaltz)

All photos except those credited above are © Dennis Hearne. Thank you, Dennis!

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THE MACCHIARINI LEGACY — CONNECTING THE DOTS

From a photo essay by Charles Versaggi © 2019
Contact: charlesversaggi@me.com

The moment you walk through the front door of Macchiarini Creative Design and Gallery on Grant Avenue in San Francisco's North Beach district, you know you've entered a special creative space. Behind the glass-encased jewelry, family memorabilia, and gallery is the atelier where you'll find Dan Macchiarini and his daughter Emma.

Barely visible through a layer of dust and metal filings, their workbench is blanketed with a panoply of mallets, calipers, pliers, protractors, files, assorted drill bits, and burs. Like most art, jewelry design is a messy process.

Dan, 66, is clearly happy at what he does best: jewelry making and metal sculpture. Sitting under a bright neon lamp, he's carefully filing a silver bracelet, wearing a protective leather cap and tool-laden apron. Peering below his magnifying glasses, through warm bespectacled eyes, he greets me with a contented smile, framed by his greying horseshoe moustache and trimmed goatee.

"Welcome to Macchiarini Creative Design," he says proudly. He introduces me to his daughter Emma, in her mid-30s, and a younger co-worker and Telegraph Hill resident, Julia Farrow, who are intently working at an adjacent bench. The pungent metallic smell of acid, polishing chemicals and welded metal permeate the small confines, as they meld raw metal and semi-precious stones into unique works of art. The rhythms of "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" play in the background.

While I photograph them, we share a few memories of North Beach and our common Italian heritage. (I grew up in the neighborhood from 1946 through the mid-60s.) We lament some of the changes that threaten the neighborhood's historical charm and culture. What was "Little Italy" has become a melting pot of ethnicities, and the ascendant tech industry continues to price-out many of the area's restaurants and creatives.

"There's a lot of pressure for North Beach to evolve in a different way," Dan said. "Despite all this, our studio has adapted over the past 71 years. We're the oldest jewelry design and sculpture studio-gallery and recognized as an S.F. Legacy Business."

Dan was married and a life partner for 38 years to Joan Mankin, beloved Bay Area actress best known for her comic skills, who succumbed to ALS in 2015. Mankin appeared in major roles with prominent theatre companies and taught circus arts to children.

Peter Macchiarini—Patriarch and Beloved North Beach Local

Spanning three generations, jewelry design and sculpture have been a family legacy since 1948 when Dan's father, Peter Macchiarini, first opened his jewelry studio a few doors down from its current Upper Grant location.

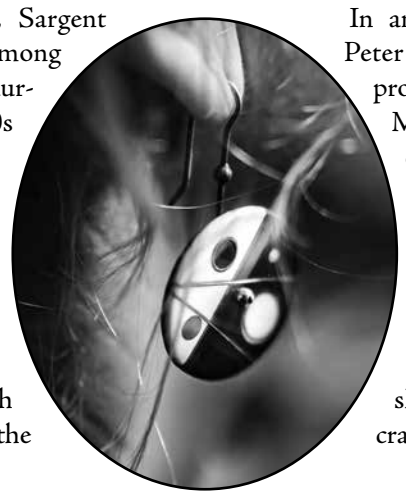
Peter was a Sonoma County-born son of Italian immigrants who pioneered modernist metalwork design and avant-garde jewelry. He was also a longtime San Franciscan and beloved North Beach local. In the 1930s he collaborated with sculptors Beniamino Bufano and Ralph Stackpole, hobnobbed with WPA artists Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Sargent Johnson, and Victor Arnautoff, among others. He was a popular figure during the 1930s Bohemian and 1950s Beat eras, designing African-inspired wood carvings and distinctive jewelry, including a wedding ring for Beat-era icon Neal Cassady.

Dan's workbench is blanketed with a panoply of work tools. Like most art, jewelry design is a messy process. © Charles Versaggi

Peter Macchiarini, beloved North Beach local and "San Francisco Legend," first opened the family's jewelry design shop on Grant Avenue in 1948. © Charles Versaggi

Elder Macchiarini was the co-founder of the Upper Grant Avenue Street Fair, the country's first street fair. Organized by many North Beach artists, as well as by merchants in the 1400 block of Grant, the Fair was supported by The Telegraph Hill Dwellers, founded in the same year—1954. After more than 65 years, The North Beach Fair (as it's now called) is still one of the Bay Area's largest, and one of the country's longest running street fairs.

Before his death in 2001 at the age of 91, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors named a portion of Kearny Street steps where he had his first live-in studio in Peter Macchiarini's honor. He was declared a "San Francisco Legend" for his contributions to the local culture.



Dot jewelry is Dan Macchiarini's specialty. © Charles Versaggi

Wearable Dot Sculptures

Dan describes himself as a sculptor rather than as a jeweler. "Dot jewelry" is one of Macchiarini's specialties and an example of "neo-modernist" design that distinguishes his work. "Our pieces are wearable sculptures," he explains. "Most jewelry tends to be flat—what we do is more three-dimensional and has layers in it. You're looking into a landscape, a 'spacescape' that conveys a sense of depth."

He shows me his recent earring designs and Burning Man rings that have been popular with clients. Incorporating some of his father's design elements, his work integrates abstract angles, lines, and orbs of various sizes, creating a fanciful sense of balance.

"Starting in the 1930s, modernism focused on breaking a design concept down to its essence," Dan said. "The difference between my father and me is that the modernists were about themselves—'This is my art, you like it, you don't like it.' In contrast, the post-modernist approach to jewelry design is self-conscious, inviting collaboration and engaging the user as part of the design and development process."

Emma Macchiarini—Hands-on Wedding Ring Workshops

When Dan Macchiarini moved to his current location in 2007, he had surfeit of square footage. His daughter Emma wanted to turn it into educational space after she got her art degree. Started at first as an experiment, in 2015 she developed "Hands-on Wedding Ring Workshops" for soon-to-be-married couples.

"I had a desire to teach all along because we have a specific way of doing things—every metalsmith does," Emma said. "So, we wanted to bring this style to other people. My dad said you can try it and see what happens."

With a successful new business nestled in the original shop, today Emma Macchiarini runs four classes a week, each with seven-to-eight people. She has subsequently expanded her workshops to corporate clients, offering them "Metalsmithing Day" as a form of team building. Married with a second fourth-generation Macchiarini on the way, she also teaches jewelry design and drawing at the San Francisco Art Institute.

I asked Emma where she and her father get their design inspirations. "A variety of things—sometimes I'll start with an ornamental stone…sometimes I get a random inspiration." She shows me a design of a rising phoenix (the symbol adorning the flag of San Francisco) she wants to make into cufflinks or a pendant. "Who knows where these ideas come from?"

In an interview a year before his death, Peter Macchiarini explained his creative process, one that no doubt informs the Macchiarini design legacy: "My ideas come, not because I'm a genius but because I put effort, desire and will into my work. Much of my work is pragmatic. One idea begets the next. You have to see the possibilities—even take advantage of the accidents. Some of my best pieces come out of sheer accidents. It's you that sees the crack in the sidewalk, who sees meaning—and that's where the artist comes in."

After my last interview and photo shoot with Dan and Emma, I finished the day with a coffee break at Caffè Trieste a few blocks away. As I sip my Caffè Macchiato—an espresso with a "dot" or "mark" (Italian: *"macchia"*) of foamed milk, the diminutive form of the Italian word *"macchiato"* comes to mind. I realized "macchiarini," loosely defined, means "little dots."

Perhaps Peter Macchiarini, the pragmatist, must have known this.

Dan Macchiarini is clearly happy at what he does best: jewelry making and metal sculpture. © Charles Versaggi

In 2015 Emma Macchiarini developed "Hands-On Wedding Ring Workshops" for soon-to-be-married couples. © Charles Versaggi

REMEMBERING GERRY CROWLEY
1934–2019

by Nancy Shanahan
nancy.shanahan@thd.org

We've lost a cherished leader and friend.
A part of our history. A piece of our heart and soul.
A one-woman army for our neighborhood and City.

Gerry Crowley (PHOTO COURTESY GERRY CROWLEY COLLECTION)

Geraldine Mary Crowley was born September 13, 1934 to Jack Diamond and Bea Diamond Bridgett in Chappaqua, New York in the township of New Castle. Gerry credited her parents, who were exceptionally active members of their community, as the models for her future activism. In her own words:

> As a result of the enthusiasm our parents had for volunteerism, my brothers and I spent many years contributing to our chosen communities and causes. I have always believed that giving to others is its own reward....Volunteering with like-minded others has been a great joy as have been the lifelong friendships.

Gerry attended the Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua and Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. She moved to San Francisco in 1959, where she started dating her future husband, Samuel Swan Crowley, Jr. Gerry talked about how they "indulged in the good life North Beach had to offer." She remembered seeing George Shearing at The Black Hawk, Duke Ellington at Basin Street West, and Lenny Bruce at Enrico Banducci's club, the hungry i. Gerry was always a tenant, living within a three-block radius of her first apartment at 409 Lombard Street.

Although she had a long career in customer service management at American Airlines and Blue Cross of California, Gerry began her neighborhood activism in 1986 when she saw a THD spokesperson interviewed on TV about the proliferation of financial institutions in North Beach moving in from the financial district. That same year, after talking to folks at THD's booth at the North Beach Fair, she filled out a membership application.

Starting as THD's social chair, then as a board member, Gerry served four separate terms as president, always fighting to preserve and protect the historic character of our neighborhood and waterfront—leading the fights to keep Rite Aid from locating on Washington Square, chain stores from invading North Beach, and high-rise development from blocking our waterfront. Gerry also initiated THD's oral history project to record the histories of unique North Beach characters.

Jon Golinger offers the following tribute to Gerry's role in the fight to save the waterfront from development like 8 Washington.

> In the spring of 2010, Simon Snellgrove, the developer who proposed to turn 8 Washington Street into the most exclusive luxury high-rise condo tower on our waterfront, was not too worried about Gerry Crowley. After all, she was just one person who decided to spend her Saturday morning in late May 2010 sitting alone by a card table at the Ferry Building farmers market. Armed with only a clipboard, she asked passersby to sign her petition to help save the waterfront by stopping the 8 Washington project.
>
> "Crowley said she would have started tabling there the week before," the *Bay Citizen* reported, "but the 75-year-old threw out her back trying to lift the table into her car . . . It may not seem threatening, but the petition drive could mean trouble for Simon Snellgrove."
>
> While Snellgrove's public relations spokesman P.J. Johnston dismissed Gerry and her concerns as "premature" since 8 Washington was undergoing design changes, Gerry's simple act of activism demonstrated the depth of love so many San Franciscans have for their waterfront and showed how hard people are willing to work to protect it.
>
> Gerry's willingness to sit out there all alone that day collecting petition signatures to challenge the approval of 8 Washington should have been a bright red warning signal for the developer and its highly-paid advisors that project had major flaws. But they didn't listen. What followed was a historic series of winning No Wall on the Waterfront ballot measure campaigns where San Francisco voters not only overwhelmingly rejected 8 Washington but also put in place permanent rules to protect the waterfront from excessive development in the future and ensure that people always can have their voices heard.
>
> As she did on so many big battles, Gerry led the way. As the leader of the No Wall on the Waterfront campaigns, I learned, never underestimate the power of one woman, a card table, and a clipboard, especially when the woman wielding that clipboard is named 'Gerry Crowley.'

Dedicated to improving our parks, Gerry served on the Pioneer Park Restoration Committee, the Friends of Washington Square, and the Fay Park Advisory Board as well as nonprofit boards, including the Northeast San Francisco Conservancy, Pelican Media, and the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center; there she was president for two of her six years on that board.

But Gerry's generosity was not confined to the boundaries of North Beach and Telegraph Hill. As an activist on many political and community fronts to benefit the City she loved, Gerry co-founded the Neighborhood Network comprised of a group of 20 citizens from all parts of San Francisco to meet with City department heads, commissioners, and other officials

Leading our fight against chain stores in North Beach, Gerry is wearing a sandwich board during a 1998 neighborhood protest against the opening of a Fuzio Bistro (owned by the "fresh Mex" Chevy's chain) on Powell Street (PHOTO COURTESY GERRY CROWLEY COLLECTION)

Gerry Crowley
© DENNIS HEARNE

on issues critical to neighborhood residents. And for many years, she represented THD on the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods.

Still not enough for Gerry, she found time to tutor ESL students at Galileo High School and serve on the Community Police Advisory Board.

On the political front, Gerry's involvement was extensive. In 2000, when the City had its first district elections, she cajoled then-THD President Aaron Peskin into running for District 3 Supervisor. During his campaign, Gerry maintained his calendar, drove him to campaign events, and helped with fundraising. In 2004 and again in 2006, Gerry was elected to the Democratic County Central Committee, serving as its Vice-Chair. She was also an active member of the District 3 Democratic Club, Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, Chinese American Democratic Club, Irish American Democratic Club, San Francisco Women's Political Committee, and the National Women's Political Caucus.

For her outstanding contributions to the neighborhood and City she loved, Gerry received numerous awards and recognition, which she always accepted with grace and humility. A few among them are:

> **2017 Margot Murphy Inspiration Award** from the Shanti Project; **2011 Woman of the Year Award** from the Democratic Women's Forum; **2011 Heart of Gold Award** from the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center; **2011 and 2009 Certificates of Recognition** from the California State Senate and the California State Assembly; **2009 Sue Bierman Memorial Award** from the San Francisco Democratic Party; and **2009 Lifetime Achievement Awards** from the US House of Representatives, the SF Board of Supervisors, and the Neighborhood Empowerment Network
>
> THD honored and recognized Gerry for extraordinary service to her beloved North Beach and Telegraph Hill with its **2016 Outstanding Contribution to the Neighborhood Award** and its **2003 Outstanding Community Service Award**.

Gerry is survived by her nephew, Jack Diamond of Connecticut, and by Angela Reston-Nunez and Caroline Reston, granddaughters of her long-time companion, Theodore Reston.

We also wish to acknowledge neighbors who provided extra special care to Gerry during her final years, including Dawn Logsdon, Lucie Faulkner, Merle Goldstone, Marlayne Morgan, Aaron Peskin, and Gene Connor; and her health caregivers, Amy Compasso, who volunteered her time for three years, as well as Kevin Sessums and Jerry Francone from the Shanti organization, were extraordinary. All became her dear friends.

Gerry requested that donations be made in her name to the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, P.O. Box 330159, SF 94133 or to Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center, 660 Lombard St., SF 94133. To support specific THD projects, tax-deductible donations may be given to the Northeast San Francisco Conservancy, 470 Columbus Ave., Suite 211, SF 94133.

- Telegraph Hill Dwellers
  https://www.thd.org/gerry-gift
- Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center
  https://www.justgiving.com/telegraphhillneighborhoodassociation
- Northeast San Francisco Conservancy
  https://nesfc.org/donate/

WATERFRONT COMMITTEE REPORT

WATERFRONT PLAN REWRITE COULD LEAD TO MORE DIVISIVE DEVELOPMENT BATTLES

by Jon Golinger
jon.golinger@thd.org

The Port of San Francisco has asked that the public provide feedback now on proposed staff-drafted amendments to overhaul the Waterfront Land Use Plan. But how closely do they really want us to look?

I have been honored to serve the last four years as an appointed Member of the San Francisco Waterfront Land Use Plan Working Group. I agreed to serve in that capacity and participate in dozens of public meetings and robust substantive discussions. I did so to carry out the direction of San Francisco voters who, in passing 1990's Proposition H (in reaction to a series of ill-fated private waterfront development schemes), created an official city policy stating that primarily "the waterfront be reserved for maritime uses, public access, and projects which aid in the preservation and restoration of the environment."

Prop. H required the Port to pause immediately all new development until after engaging in a public process to create a Waterfront Land Use Plan. The Port Commission adopted the Plan in June 1997. Prop. H also required that the Port engage in a public process to review it "at a minimum of every five years, with a view toward making any necessary amendments consistent with this initiative." While piecemeal amendments to the Plan were made over the years, there has never been a public process to review comprehensively and update it until now, in the wake of several failed waterfront developments such as the Mills Mall at Piers 27-31 and 8 Washington St.

In addition to prohibiting hotels from being built on piers, the heart of Proposition H is the requirement that the Port create and abide by a comprehensive Waterfront Land Use Plan rather than pursue waterfront development based primarily on the interests and needs of private developers or politicians. The Plan articulated in Prop. H is not designed merely to be an aspirational, non-binding vision document that collects dust on a shelf. This time, a substantive, detailed pier-by-pier blueprint gives guidance to the Port so it can move forward with development proposals knowing which uses to seek for which piers. This is Prop. H's direction to ensure a diverse, inclusive, and public-oriented waterfront rather than just a grab bag of uses.

A positive feature of the recently unveiled Draft Amendments is a new emphasis on bringing museums and educational uses, arts and culture, entertainment, and recreational activities to the waterfront through the designation of a new category of "Public-Oriented Uses" in the Land Use Tables for each pier. This new emphasis reflects the consensus of the Working Group that there is a gaping hole on San Francisco's waterfront where these uses should be in order to give families, youth, and residents from every neighborhood across San Francisco, along with visitors to the city, a reason to spend time on our waterfront. This change reflects the long-overdue need for the Port not just to rely on profits from private development for new revenue but to develop new sources of funding to bring public-oriented uses to the waterfront such as creative public financing or the philanthropy and fundraising that made the Exploratorium possible.

However, in three fundamental ways the Draft Amendments would gut the core intent of the original Waterfront Plan, thwart the will of the voters in passing Proposition H, and likely lead to more—rather than fewer—divisive battles over private development plans for the public waterfront.

Concern #1: *A comparison of the pier-by-pier Land Use Tables in the existing Plan to the Land Use Tables in the staff's proposed Draft Amendments shows that the Draft Amendments completely eliminate the current Plan's existing prohibition on non-maritime private office uses being allowed to occupy the most valuable public piers.* Of all the designated "Acceptable" uses for the waterfront outlined in the Plan, non-maritime, private offices are the most exclusionary. The public is not allowed to enter them either as users or visitors. Further, non-maritime private offices can as easily be built inland as on the waterfront. For these reasons, non-maritime private office uses are not considered "Public Trust-consistent uses" under the state's Public Trust Doctrine and presumptively not permitted.

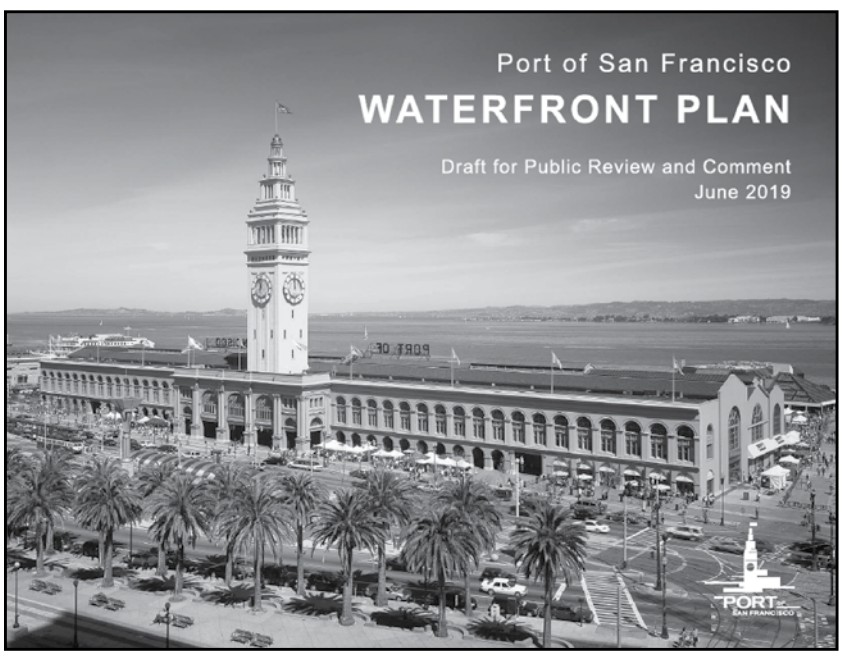
San Francisco voters also oppose putting private office uses on San Francisco's public waterfront. During a previous waterfront development fight, a poll by David Binder Research found San Francisco voters ranking private office space dead last on the list of uses they want to see on our waterfront. Fifty percent of voters opposed private offices on the waterfront with just 45 percent in support. In the same poll, recreational uses such as kayaking, sailing, soccer fields, and skate parks, along with restaurants, all received 80 percent or higher approval ratings.

A waterfront filled with non-maritime private office buildings, in addition to excluding the public, is also a waterfront that is largely "dead" after 5 pm and on weekends when private offices are closed rather than a waterfront alive and active with a diversity of uses day and night. Particularly impacted could be the set of incredibly valuable and prominent Northeast Waterfront Piers 19, 23, and 29-31 along the Embarcadero that the Port is prioritizing for private development beginning in 2020. If the Draft Amendments are approved, these piers would likely be targeted for private office development.

Concern #2: *The Draft Amendments delete the narrative descriptions of what should go on each pier.* By deleting them entirely in favor of broad "vision" language, the Draft Amendments create a "Wild Wild West," where developers decide what they want to put on the piers. Instead, updated versions of the narrative descriptions for the desired uses for each pier or set of piers should remain in the Plan. That would follow the direction of voters to use the Plan to shape a diverse waterfront and ensure a variety of uses that prioritize maritime, public access, arts, culture, and recreational rather than uses that mainly serve developers' interests instead of the public's.

Concern #3: *The proposed Draft Amendments fail to include a provision to "front-load" public benefits in private development projects as was recommended during the Waterfront Land Use Plan Working Group process.* This omission would open the door to more "bait and switch" developments of the kind that has occurred at Pier 70, where promised public benefits never come to fruition after high-revenue generating uses are built first. As was recommended during the Working Group process, all big private development projects should be required by the Plan to "front-load" public benefits such as parks, recreation, and public access to ensure that they actually happen.

When San Francisco voters approved Proposition H in 1990, they chose to require the creation of a detailed waterfront development blueprint to ensure that San Francisco's waterfront remains "an irreplaceable public resource of the highest value." Unfortunately, as proposed, the Draft Amendments to the San Francisco Waterfront Land Use Plan Working Group would undermine that critical mission in key ways. We must now call upon the Port Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and, if necessary, the voters to ensure that our waterfront remains for the public and open to all of us.



Waterfront Plan - Draft Report (PORT OF SF)

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ART & CULTURE REPORT

by Romalyn Schmaltz, Committee Chair
romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org

Welcome to my favorite time of year in the neighborhood! With autumn, comes some of the best walking weather and romantic light that North Beach enjoys year-round but now in particular abundance. And these gorgeous conditions lend themselves to strolling around while patronizing local businesses and galleries.

I have good news for you. A group of neighbors, partnering with the North Beach Business Association, are enthusiastic about ramping up our monthly North Beach First Fridays and including more local businesses in those "art walks" in new and creative ways. If you'd like to get involved, email me at *romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org*, and let's work together to make North Beach a true art capitol of San Francisco once again.

I'm pleased to announce some Art and Culture events coming up in North Beach and on Telegraph Hill soon and through the holidays. This list is far from all-inclusive, and if you're an event coordinator or would like to begin hosting events, be they in a traditional gallery or in a more innovative setting, again, please contact me with future information or for coordination.

North Beach First Fridays: Now with more than a dozen participants stretching from Canessa Gallery and Grey City Gallery in the southern end of the neighborhood to Modern Eden Gallery and Sweeties Art Bar in the northern part, North Beach First Fridays will become even more robust in the coming months. Stop by Macchiarini Creative Design at 1544 Grant Ave. for maps and guidance. Runs typically from 5-10 pm on the first Friday of every month.

Specific event listings submitted in time for publication include:

- **Grey City Galleries (250 Columbus Ave. at Saroyan Place, #202)**: Artist Beth Ashcroft's cozy gallery features local artists every month in addition to her permanent collection from dozens of years of her work. For those intimidated by the large gallery experience, this is an intimate place to get to know your neighborhood artists in a convivial but low-key setting. Open all First Fridays or by appointment. www.greycitygallery.com

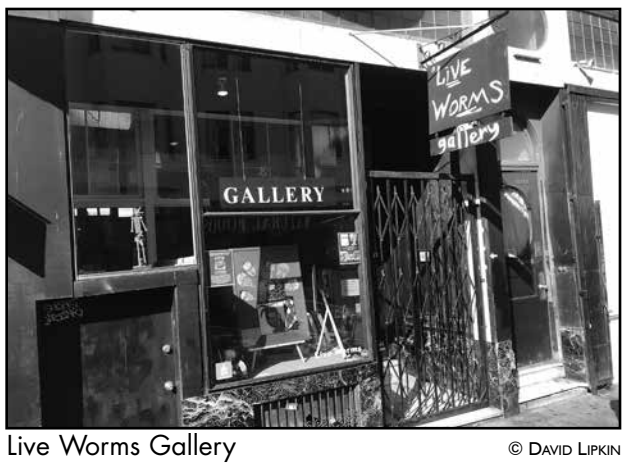
Beat Museum © David Lipkin

- **The Beat Museum (540 Broadway St.)**: Jerry Cimino's ultimate tribute to the Beat Generation, his museum offers a permanent collection of rare art, artifacts, and books in addition to a wide range of live readings and musical offerings. Exhibit Opening: Dharma Brothers: The Lifelong Friendship of Gary Snyder and John Montgomery—Friday, November 15, 7 pm. *www.kerouac.com*

- **Live Worms Gallery (1345 Grant Ave.)**: Congratulations to the crew of local artists who've merged to keep our major modernist gallery alive after Kevin Brown's retirement as a gallery owner! In addition to an incredible variety of local art on the walls, Flower Piano co-founder Mauro ffortissimo recently donated a piano to the space, encouraging spontaneous live music from local talent to ameliorate the visual art experience. *First Friday events every month. www.sflivewormsgallery.com*

- **Mule Design (80 Fresno St. off Grant Avenue)**: In addition to a committed exhibition space, this design house in the former Emerald Tablet space offers design services, podcasts, and multi-purpose creative space. Ongoing: First Fridays; Second Saturday Cinema (Local Filmmakers, Videographers); End-Of-The-Month Strawberry Jam (& Friends). *www.mulegallery.com*

- **Macchiarini Creative Design (1544 Grant Ave.)**: For more than 70 years and four generations, the Macchiarini family has been the neighborhood go-to for custom modernist jewelry, fine art, and local history, offering lectures and classes in addition to openings on all First Fridays. *November 1, 6-9 pm—Day of the Dead First Fridays; Pumpkin carving, face-painting, and ghost stories; Picturing Macchiarini: A Solo Exhibition by Emma Macchiarini—December 6, 6-9 pm. www.macreativedesign.com*



Live Worms Gallery © David Lipkin

- **Modern Eden Gallery (801 Greenwich St.)**: Kim Larson hosts fantastically curated monthly exhibitions in a magical space just off Columbus Avenue and always participates in First Fridays. Esprit de Corps: Modern Eden Gallery x Haven Gallery collaborative group show—November 9, 6-9 pm; Stephanie Law: Conjure—Solo début by Bay Area painter and illustrator; December 14, 6-9 pm. *www.moderneden.com*

Also, stay tuned for more information about the **Telegraph Hill Dwellers' Annual Holiday Party, the North Beach Merchants' Annual Holiday Party,** and the **Caffè Trieste Annual Holiday Firefighters Toy Drive**, all to be held in December.

Macchiarini Creative Design © David Lipkin

DENNIS HEARNE
photographer

www.dennishearne.com

tel 415 989 5152
email dennishearne@mac.com
779 Vallejo Street
San Francisco, California 94133

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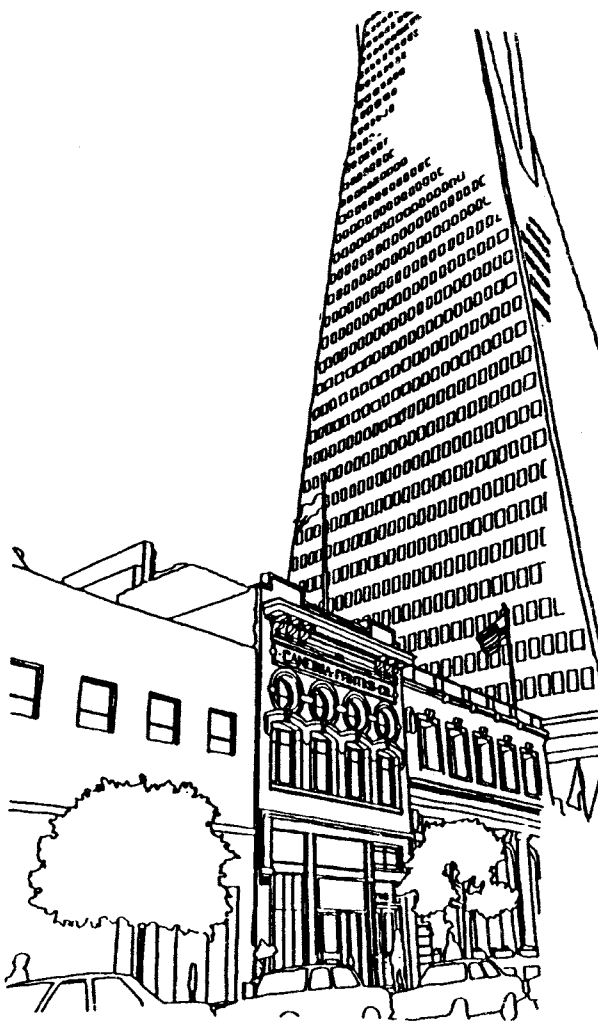

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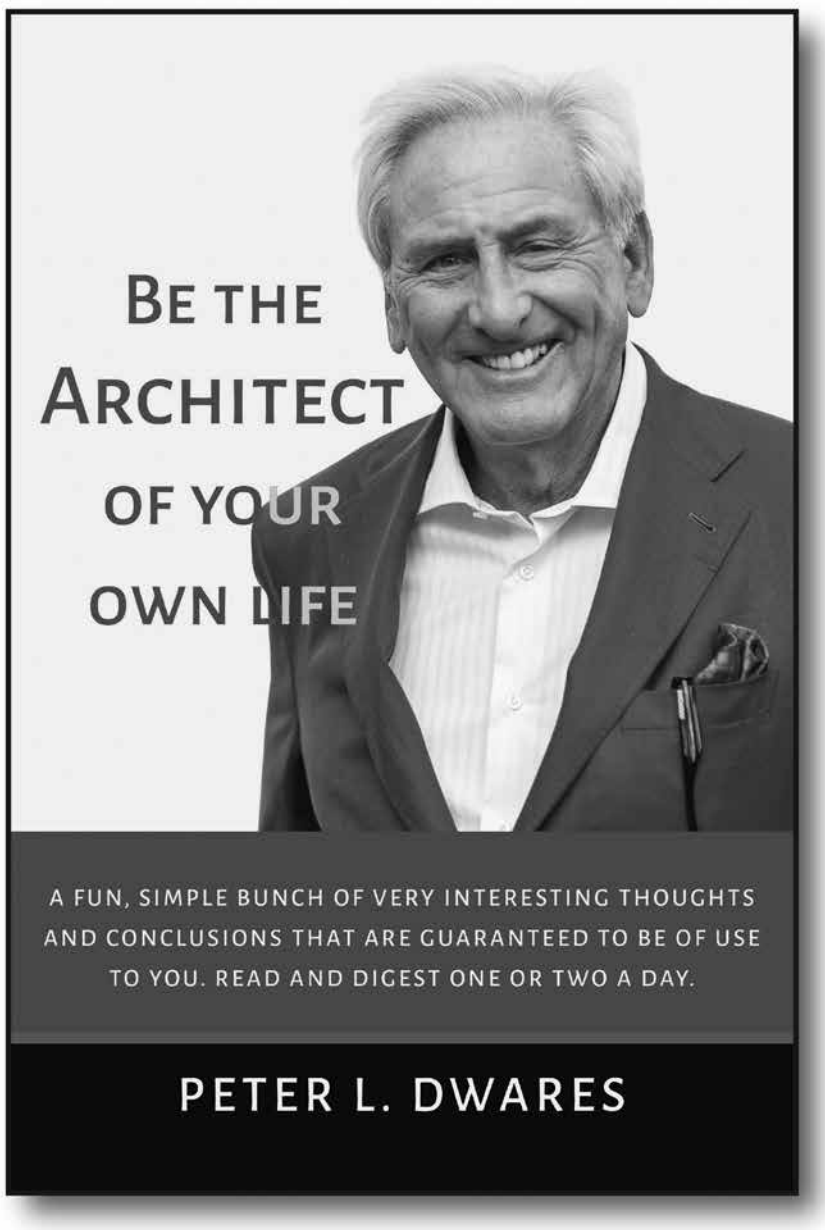


ITALIAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY UPDATE

by Judy Irving

In addition to Katherine Petrin, who is transcribing the interview with her close family friend **Cora Luchetti,** four more volunteers have stepped up, and you could be next! Here are brief descriptions of our new transcribers, along with personal notes on why they chose their subjects.

Stella Patri (Internet Archive)

JANET BEACH is a consultant, strategist, and market researcher with US Marketing Services and volunteers at the nonprofit Job Forum, serving as its Executive Director. Janet chose two people she knew.

Alfredo Pisciotta *reupholstered most of our furniture and did so multiple times over the years. I enjoyed our encounters and his memories and stories of being, as he described himself, a "tack spitter." Mrs. Pisciotta always gave our young family her homemade tomato sauce and was such a wonderful person and charmer as well!*

Jimo Perini, *a local photographer, photographed my son at age 5; that child is now 32! They had a photo session together in Golden Gate Park, resulting in some lovely photos of young boyhood—complete with a missing front tooth.*

Jimo Perini © David Harlan

KELLIN SCUDDER is a journalist who has worked in public relations, human resources, and career counseling. Her interest in stories and her ability to listen encouraged her to become a volunteer transcriber. She, too, knew her subject.

My husband and I took many broken watches and, occasionally, broken jewelry to **Mateo Ciuffreda** *in the '80s and '90s. He was a lovely man with an old-world demeanor and dignity.*

Kellin added a note about Alfredo Pisciotta, a very popular man!

We had some contact with Alfredo Pisciotta years ago and happened to mention this to our elderly Italian landlady, Emma Carlomagno. Emma immediately responded that he had been active at their church (not sure if Peter & Paul's or St. Francis) and that "all the ladies loved Al Pisciotta." It seems he was the perfect combination of very cute and very nice.

TERMEH YEGHIAZARIAN *www.termehart.com* is a visual artist and on the Faculty of Art at City College of San Francisco who has exhibited her work nationally and internationally. She is a co-founder of Golden Thread Productions and was Volunteerism Manager at Burning Man. She has also volunteered as a THD board member and founder of the THD Art & Culture Committee. Termeh chose another artist to transcribe.

I've known Danny, Peter Macchiarini's son, for many years. I never met Peter but treasure him as a local artist and a significant contributor to the cultural fabric in North Beach.

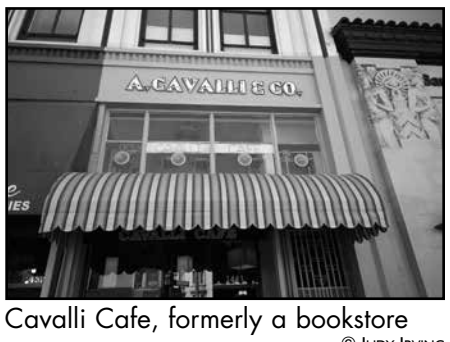
CARMEN WHITE has lived in San Francisco since 1973 and North Beach since 1996. She chose two Italian Americans with similar life themes.

As a lover of books—both as artifacts and as conveyors of knowledge and wonder—transcribing the interviews of **Stella Patri** *and* **John Valentini** *was a treat.*

As of press time, these two interviews have been completely transcribed. Here are Carmen's descriptions of her two subjects:

Stella Patri *was known for her restoration of antique books, a craft that took her to museums and libraries in England and Italy. But book-restorer was just one of her careers. In the 1910s, she worked as a milliner while studying art at the original Academy of Art in the Mark Hopkins mansion. And during World War II, she joined the war effort as a welder at Marinship. Approaching 100 at the time of the interview, Stella had a century of memories to relate of a San Francisco and North Beach now gone.*

John Valentini *worked at the A. Cavalli bookstore beginning in 1959, taking ownership from his father in 1978. However, the Cavalli bookstore goes back to the 1880s. John's rich history of the bookstore is interwoven with tales of the Cavallis and Valentinis, founders of North Beach's Italian newspapers and keepers of the peripatetic bookstore—originating on Montgomery Street when it was printers' row, relocated to Columbus Avenue, once housed in today's City Lights Bookstore, then Vesuvio café-bar before settling at 1441 Stockton Street. A. Cavalli store served as the living room of the Italian community in the North Beach of the 1930s, '40s and '50s when it was "wall-to-wall Italian."*



Cavalli Cafe, formerly a bookstore © Judy Irving

I hope these stories have encouraged you to volunteer to transcribe one or more of the remaining interviews: Frances Farruggia (might have gone to school with Joe DiMaggio, according to Judy Robinson who conducted these interviews in 1996), Dante Benedetti (knew Joe DiMaggio), Lillian Baldassari, John Beviacqua (Sicilian fishing family), Reba Hudson (gay bartender), Ruth Ricco (Four Corners settlers), Peter San Filippo, and Joe Zambon.

Contact me if you'd like to immerse yourself in local Italian American history while helping others access these fascinating stories: *judy.irving@thd.org*

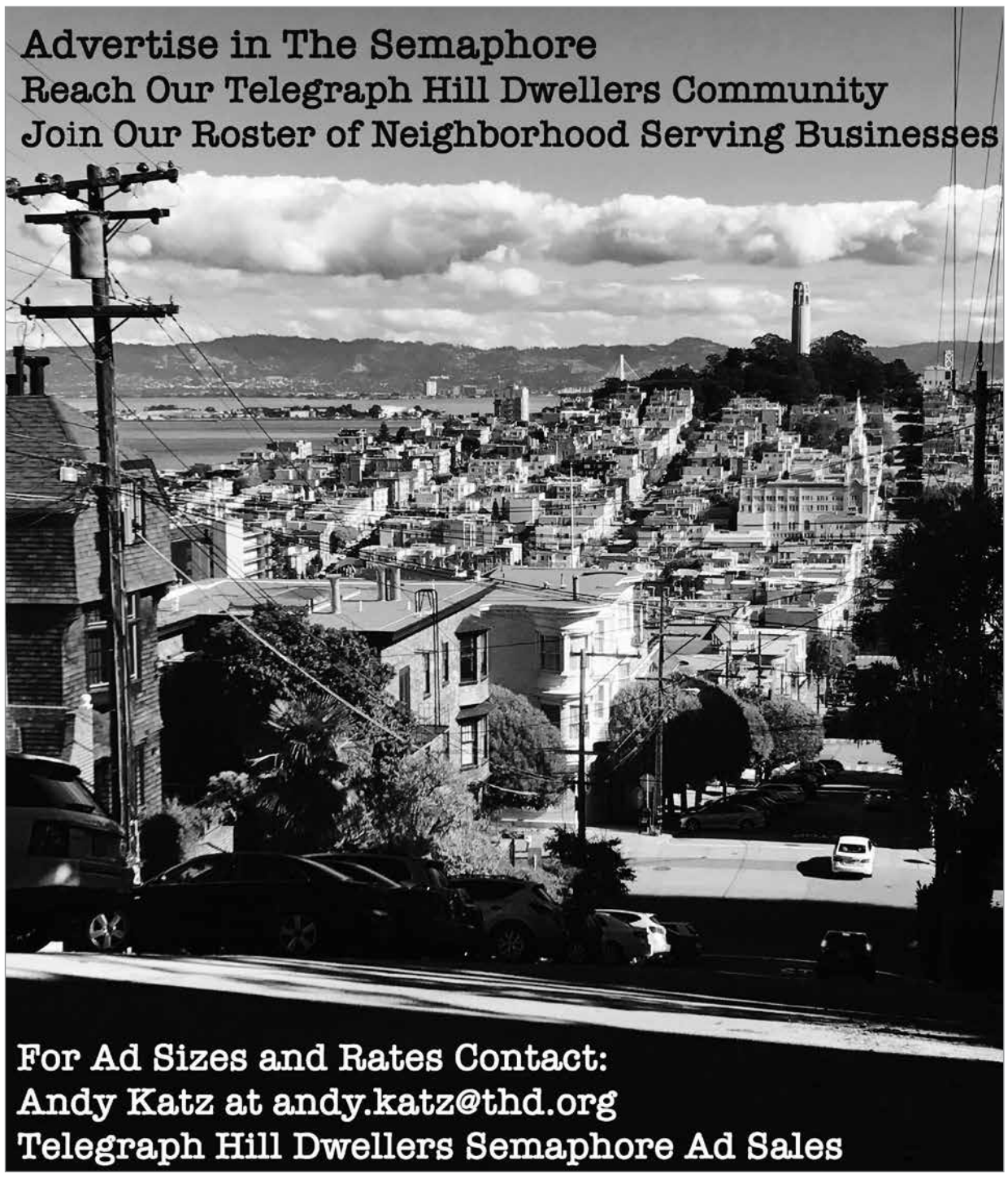
SIDEWHEEL STEAMER!

by George Schumm

There's an oft-told story. At some point in the early 1850s, a play was being held here in town. An actor walks on stage, throws his arms straight out to the sides, and wails, "Oh, Lord, what does this mean?" A wag in the audience shouts "Sidewheel steamer!" and brings down the house.

The story, possibly apocryphal, is likely a fair reflection of the degree of semaphore literacy at that time—at least, concerning this particular signal and perhaps others as well. Shipping was central in the lives of early San Franciscans. It was the engine of commerce, the lifeline to friends and loved ones back on the East Coast or Far East, the source of news from around the country and the globe, and, for many, simply a form of entertainment. It was, in a very real sense, the life blood of the community. And this was all tied up, for a three-year period, with the rotating arms on our Telegraph Hill semaphore.

courtesy Pierre Berloquin, Hidden Codes and Grand Designs



TREASURER'S REPORT

by Nick Ferris, THD Treasurer
treasurer@thd.org

For reasons dating far before my time, THD operates on a fiscal year beginning April 1 and ending March 31. So, as you read this, we're halfway through our year.

In May of this year, THD's board adopted our current budget, which is essentially based on the previous year's budget and actual finances. We have thus far exceeded expectations of breaking even and have a net income of $7,461.48, which is exciting and opens up opportunities to service better our neighborhood.

THD's largest expense is the production of the publication you are currently reading. *The Semaphore* accounts for almost half of our total expenditures. Advertising revenues cover part of the cost and membership dues the remaining portion. Events are our second largest expense with revenues from attendees covering the majority of the cost.

THD has no staff and all officers and directors are unpaid volunteers, reimbursed only for expenses incurred on behalf of THD.

THD Committees Need You

Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference! Join a THD committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Art & Culture: Romalyn Schmaltz romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org
Budget: Nick Ferris nick.ferris@thd.org
Membership: Andy Katz THDmembership@gmail.com
Oral History Project: Judy Irving judy.irving@thd.org
Transportation: Howard Wong and David Becker
howard.wong@thd.org and david.becker@thd.org
Parks & Trees: Don Raichle don.raichle@thd.org
Planning & Zoning: Mary Lipian and Nancy Shanahan
mary.lipian@thd.org and nancy.shanahan@thd.org
Semaphore: Cap Caplan (Editor) cap.caplan@thd.org
David Lipkin (Photo Editor) david.lipkin@thd.org
Social & Program: Rachel Rodriguez and Patrice Ignacio Moll
rachel.rodriguez@thd.org and patrice.ignacio.moll@thd.org
Waterfront: Jon Golinger jon.golinger@thd.org
Communications: Al Fontes, Katie Hopkins, Leah Lovelace, Sarah Kliban
al.fontes@thd.org

Planning & Zoning Committee meets last Thursdays of each month. Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, or 391-5652.

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Central Police District Community Advisory Board: Daryl Babbitt
Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods: open position
Friends of Washington Square Liaison: Don Raichle
Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group Member: Jon Golinger

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS JULY—SEPTEMBER 2019

by Mary Lipian, Recording Secretary
mary.lipian@thd.org

July 2019

Washington Square Park Closure

The Board was updated on the status of the Washington Square Water Conservation Project that requires the park to be closed for at least six months beginning June 17. Unfortunately, the project will also include the removal of several trees in the park.

THD's Appeal of DPW's Decision to Remove Ficus Trees Along Columbus Avenue adjoining Washington Square

The Board of Appeals' hearing of THD's appeal of DPW's decision to remove the ficus trees on Columbus Avenue next to Washington Square, originally scheduled for June 19, has been continued to September 11. On June 7, 2019, THD submitted a proposal to settle the appeal if DPW would agree to the following: (1) 3D renderings of the proposed replacement trees along Columbus Avenue would be prepared and presented to THD for review and approval prior to final species selection; (2) replacement trees would be 36" box size; (3) all empty basins within three blocks of Washington Square would be planted within three months; (4) all empty basins throughout District 3 would be planted over the next two years; and (5) that the Bureau of Urban Forestry would reach out to THD in advance of any proposed future removals of ficus trees within District 3.

New Member Mixer

A new member mixer was planned for August 13 from 6 - 8 pm at the Maritime Wine Bar. New members who joined THD during the past 12 months were invited.

THD's 2019-2020 Budget was approved.

August 2019—No Board Meeting is held in August.

September 2019

Honoring Gerry Crowley

The Board acknowledged the death of Gerry Crowley on September 10, honoring her by sharing her many contributions to THD.

Resignation of David Becker from the Board

David Becker informed the Board that he would soon be moving to France and would no longer be able to serve as a Director. The Board wished him success and thanked him for his contribution to THD as Co-Chair of the Transportation Committee.

Presentation by Port Staff of Draft Waterfront Plan

Diane Oshima, Deputy Director, Planning & Environment, Port of San Francisco, presented a summary of the Port's Draft Waterfront Land Use Plan, which will soon be undergoing environmental review. Among the issues Ms. Oshima discussed were the importance of encouraging the rehabilitation of historic piers, attracting uses for public enjoyment, and allowing additional office use on the waterfront as might be necessary. The Board expressed its concern that non-maritime uses, such as excessive office use on the historic piers, would close off the piers and bulkheads to public use. The Board discussed how THD could be engaged in the process going forward.

Board of Appeal Hearings

Board members were reminded of two important appeal hearings scheduled on September 11 at the San Francisco Board of Appeals: (1) the Planning Commission's denial of the building permit for a proposed project at 120-124 Varennes Street, where tenants were evicted by a developer desiring to convert the units to high-end condominiums; and (2) DPW's decision to remove the ficus trees along Columbus Avenue adjoining Washington Square.

TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

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Editor of *The Semaphore:* Cap Caplan — cap.caplan@thd.org

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Patrice Ignacio Moll
Rachel Rodriguez
Sarah Kliban

Term: 2018-2020
David Becker
Leah Lovelace
Don Raichle
Julia Martin Murphy

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS!

There's no better way to be connected to your neighborhood and be a voice of the hill than by joining Telegraph Hill Dwellers, today.

Join at *THD.org*. If you'd prefer to have a brochure and sign-up form mailed to you, please send an email to *membership@thd.org*. Already a member? Give one as a gift!

Membership includes:

- A one-year subscription to news & events via email and a quarterly paper, *The Semaphore.*
- Opportunities to be active in your community. Your passion likely aligns to one of many committees.
- Social and Art & Culture events throughout the year – attend and contribute!

Annual Dues:
Individuals..... $35
Households..... $50
Seniors (65 and older)..... $25
Senior Households..... $40

Join now or give the gift of membership at *THD.org* or email *membership@thd.org*.

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P. O. BOX 330159
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133

THE SEMAPHORE

#227 Autumn 2019

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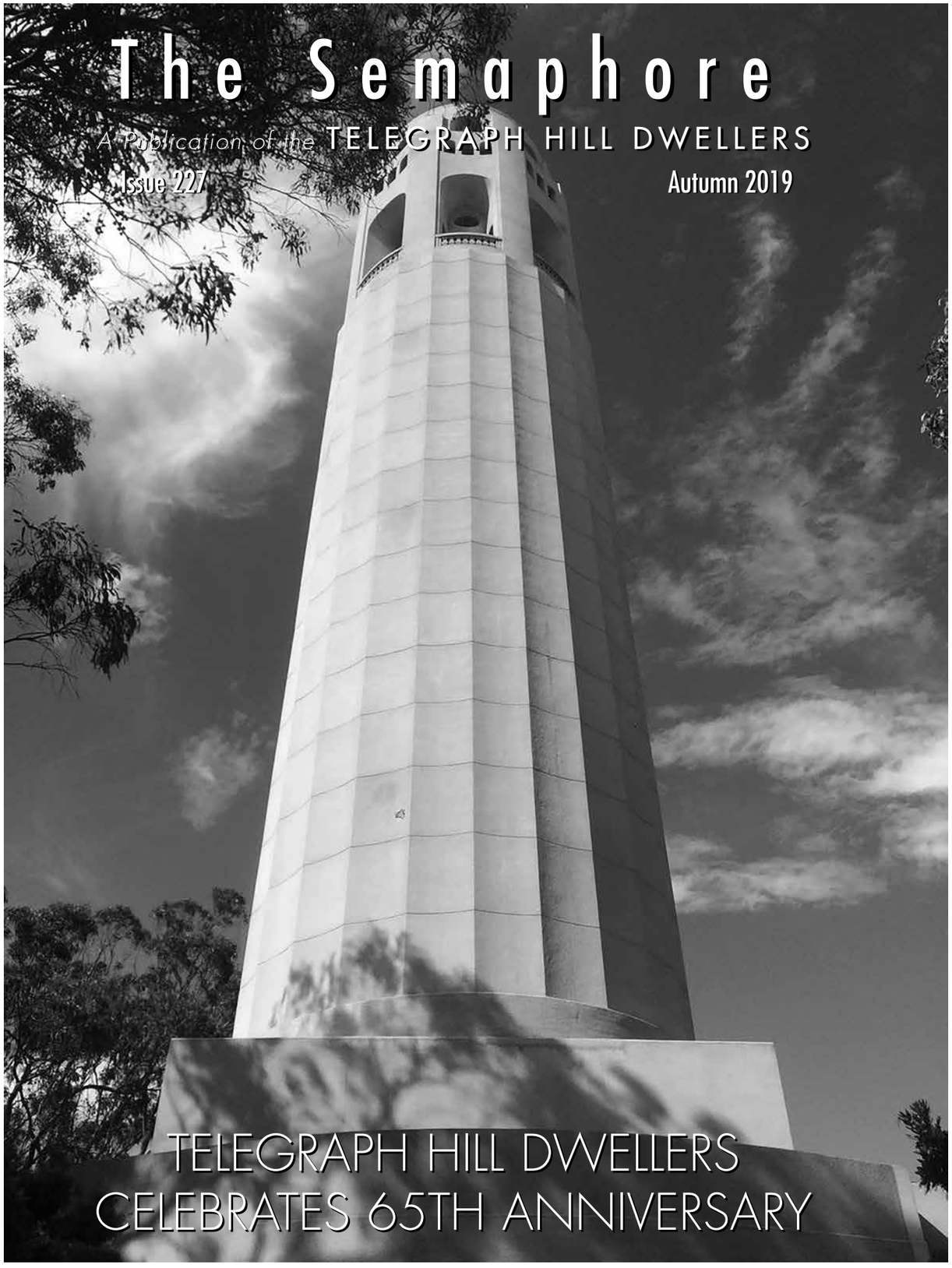
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